



(U) CTS Horizon Report 30 July 2018

(U//FOUO) Note: The Counterterrorism Section ("CTS") Horizon Report is an open source U//FOUO daily intelligence publication tailored specifically to the needs of its principal reader. The brief is based on preliminary reporting, some of which has been derived from media outlets. Reporting of this nature is often inaccurate and subject to change as the situation continues to unfold. The principal will be made aware of any known threats to Chicago, on a need to know and right to know basis.

(U//FOUO) Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

(U//FOUO) CTS has no information to indicate that a specific, credible threat exists to Chicago, at this time, but based on the current threat environment CPIC/CTS will continue to monitor emerging intelligence.

(U//FOUO) Current Threat Environment

(U//FOUO) Foreign terrorist organizations—such as al-Qa’ida, the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham, and their affiliates remain intent on attacking Western targets and continue to call on individuals to conduct independent attacks in the United States using a variety of weapons and tactics including arson, vehicle ramming, edged weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and the use of small arms. Recent plots and attacks demonstrate the continued and growing interest by foreign terrorist organizations and other violent extremists in targeting mass gathering events. To date, these attacks have focused primarily on soft targets, such as tourist destinations, sporting events, music venues, shopping districts, and mass-transportation systems.

(U//FOUO) US-based HVEs—possibly encouraged by violent extremist messaging encouraging further attacks, media attention, and perceived success of recent incidents—may also be inspired to act during the holidays and opportunities such as a convention to access large crowds. HVEs and small groups of individuals are of particular concern due to their ability to remain undetected until operational, their willingness to attack civilians and soft targets, and their ability to inflict significant casualties with weapons that do not require specialized knowledge, access, or training.

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(U//FOUO) Local Suspicious Activity Reporting (SARs)

(U//FOUO) On July 19, 2018, and for situational awareness:: A Special Olympics soccer team athlete from Bangladesh (missing) was observed on video leaving a local hotel and walks e/b on then gets in a what appears to be a Livery Vehicle that was waiting. The Bangladesh Special Olympics Soccer team was scheduled to leave on 22-JUL-2018 O'Hare. The missing did not check into the flight. Chicago Police Detective supplementary report (24 July 2018) indicated that missing was now in Akron, Ohio. The incident was recorded under Chicago Police report JB358133.

(U) CT Watch Overnight News

CONUS

1. Man accused of mass shooting plot in Milwaukee wins release from jail [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel/USA Today – embedded photo]

- A U.S. District Court Judge has ordered the release of a Milwaukee man accused of illegally possessing machine guns sold to him by undercover FBI agents.
- Samy Hamzeh, 25, had already been in jail for about 30 months — roughly the sentence he'd face if convicted of the charges stemming from January 2016 — when police said he planned to shoot dozens of people . . . in downtown Milwaukee.
- Judges on three previous occasions denied his release pending trial. The government blamed the delay in trial on the complexity of the case and the many motions filed by the defense.
- The case is based on months of recorded conversations, in Arabic, between Hamzeh and two informants working for the FBI.
- The FBI said Hamzeh's arrest thwarted a planned mass shooting "to defend Islam" at the former Masonic center in downtown Milwaukee.

2. ISIS terror suspect to remain in jail pending trial in Detroit [The Detroit News – embedded sketch and photo]

- A Dearborn man captured on a Syrian battlefield and charged with supporting the Islamic State agreed to stay in jail pending trial in a unique terrorism case in Detroit.
- Ibraheem Musaibli, 28, who was flown from Syria to the United States this week to face charges, consented to detention during a brief hearing in federal court.

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- Musaibli returned to federal court for a detention hearing Friday, during which the government was expected to argue he is a flight risk, a danger to the community and provided support to the Islamic State terror group.
- That portrayal is at odds with comments from Musaibli's relatives, who claim he was kidnapped by the terrorist group and imprisoned because he would not fight.
- No family members attended Friday's hearing, at which Musaibli pleaded not guilty.

3. Plano [TX] teen indicted after alleged ISIS-inspired plot to 'cast terror into your hearts' with Frisco mall shooting [Dallas Morning News – embedded photos]

- A Plano teen accused of plotting an ISIS-inspired mass shooting at Frisco's Stonebriar Centre mall was indicted by a grand jury Thursday.
- Matin Azizi-Yarand, 17, is charged with solicitation to commit capital murder of a peace officer and making a terroristic threat, according to the grand jury results released Friday afternoon.
- He has been in custody since his May arrest at Plano West Senior High School. His bail is set at \$3 million.
- The teen "made clear that his attack would be on behalf of ISIS," according to detailed affidavits related to his arrest. ISIS is an acronym for the Islamic State group.

4. Guantánamo prison commander: We've gotten no word of incoming prisoners [Miami Herald via McClatchy News Service]

- The commander in charge of Guantánamo prison operations said Friday that he has received no orders to prepare for new war on terror detainees, leaving uncertain when or if the prison would grow despite President Donald Trump's campaign pledge to detain more terror suspects at the base.
- Underscoring the uncertainty, Rear Adm. John Ring also told McClatchy that while the current, long-held war-on-terror detainees get to decide whether to be interrogated there's no policy yet for how to handle future captives.
- [The] London press have been abuzz for days with suggestions that two suspected Islamic State prisoners, men who after their capture in Syria were stripped of British citizenship, were bound for detention in this remote, wartime prison.

5. Cleveland Fourth of July terrorism suspect to undergo competency evaluation [Cleveland Plain Dealer – embedded photo]

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- A federal magistrate judge ordered a competency evaluation for a man accused of plotting a terrorist attack on Fourth of July fireworks spectators in downtown Cleveland.
- Magistrate Judge David Ruiz wrote Friday that he found good cause to question whether Demetrius Pitts can assist in his defense.
- He ordered a psychiatric or psychological examination and ordered the completion of a report on Pitts' competency as soon as possible. Ruiz will schedule a hearing date once he receives the report.
- The order came two days after Pitts' federal public defender Charles Fleming wrote that his client has long-standing mental health issues. Prosecutors did not object to the request for an evaluation.
- This updates [court ruling] July 26 ONN CONUS 4

6. [\[Senator\] Blumenthal seeks declassification of last 9/11 documents](#) [Washington Times via AP]

- U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut says he plans to introduce a resolution that calls for declassifying all remaining documents related to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.
- The Democrat is scheduled to appear Monday at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford with survivors and families of the 9/11 victims.
- Blumenthal contends the documents may reveal unknown connections between the terrorists and foreign nations.

7. [They Fought Terrorists, But Can't Get Visas Congress Promised](#) [MSN via The Atlantic]

- The visa program was established in 2009 specifically for Afghan citizens, along with their spouses and unmarried children under 21, who work for the U.S. government in Afghanistan, and many of whom later face reprisals, even death, for their allegiance to America.
- A similar program was set up for Iraqi citizens in 2008.
- Two months into the Trump administration, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson directed American embassies around the world to double down on visas and “increase scrutiny of visa applicants for potential security and non-security ineligibilities.”
- Since then, there’s been a stark decline in SIV [Special Immigrant Visa] arrivals.
- From January to June of 2017, 10,267 immigrants came to the U.S. on special immigrant visas.
- Over the same period in 2018, the number had fallen by more than half, to 4,166.

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8. An obscure federal law may give corporations immunity from lawsuits over terrorism [Los Angeles Times]

- For MGM Resorts International, millions of dollars could hinge on a single question: Was the shooting massacre of 58 people at a concert in Las Vegas last year an act of terrorism?
- But how the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or the federal courts answer the question could determine whether shooting survivors and families of the dead can sue the casino and hotel giant, which they say missed warning signs of his attack.
- . . . MGM is arguing that the attack was terrorism, and that under a law passed by Congress in 2002, the company is immune from such lawsuits.
- If MGM is successful, it could open the door for more companies and public agencies to seek protection from lawsuits not just over clear-cut terrorist attacks with political agendas, but over mass shootings with no known motive.
- The Support Anti-terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act — known as the SAFETY Act — is unfamiliar to most Americans. It was an obscure bit of tort reform that passed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, [in] . . . federal anti-terrorism legislation that created the Department of Homeland Security.
- If the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in 2001 made Americans fear for their lives, corporations saw an additional threat from terrorism: legal liability.

OCONUS

1. Manila court OKs US request for terror suspect's extradition [Fox via AP – embedded photo]

- A Philippine court has granted a U.S. government request for the extradition of a Filipino doctor suspected by U.S. authorities of being an Islamic State group sympathizer and plotting bombings and shootings at New York City concert venues, subway stations and Times Square.
- Presiding Judge Rosalyn Mislos-Loja granted the U.S. request in a July 23 ruling which The Associated Press obtained Friday and ordered Russell Langi Salic to be extradited to the U.S. to face the charges.
- Salic, who is detained in Manila, has denied the charges, opposed his extradition and can appeal.
- Last year, U.S. prosecutors said Salic was one of three Islamic State group sympathizers who plotted bombings and shootings in 2016 in New York before U.S. agents thwarted the plot. Salic was taken into custody in Manila last year.

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- Canadian citizen Abdulrahman El Bahnasawy was arrested in the U.S. in 2016 and has pleaded guilty, and an American of Pakistani origin, Talha Haroon, was arrested in Pakistan in the same year.

2. [Assange lawyers brace for Ecuadorian embassy evicting WikiLeaks publisher at any moment](#) [Washington Times]

- Julian Assange's legal team is preparing to defend the WikiLeaks publisher against a possible U.S. extradition request in anticipation of Ecuador ejecting him from its London embassy at any moment.
- Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno confirmed Friday that his government is working with British officials toward brokering Mr. Assange's exit from the embassy
- "If they do remove his protection, we will go to the courts to protect him," said Jennifer Robinson, an attorney for Mr. Assange, The Times of London reported Saturday.

3. [ISIS terrorist jailed \[in UK\] over murder plot on Prince George is 'stabbed by inmates in Strangeways prison'](#) [Daily Mail – UK – embedded photos]

- Husnain Rashid was jailed for 25 years for trying to encourage terrorist attacks
- He wanted his followers on Telegram to target Prince George at school
- A prisoner used a toothbrush with an embedded razor blade to slash him
- An investigation has been launched to determine how Rashid was attacked

4. [Six terrorism suspects found guilty by Tbilisi City Court](#) [Agenda – Rep. of Georgia]

- Six terrorism suspects, who were detained before, during or after the 2017 large-scale counter terrorism raids in Tbilisi and Pankisi, have been found guilty by Tbilisi City Court today [July 27].
- Ruslan Shavadze and Shoaip Borzиеv have been found guilty of membership in a terrorist organization . . . Both have been sentenced to 13 years in prison.
- The remaining four have been charged with support of terrorist activities and providing terrorists with necessary material items.
- The court. . . sent Ruslan Aldamov and Anatoli Berdzenishvili to 11 years in prison, Ramaz Margoshvili to 12 years in prison and Zurab Idoidze to 10 years in prison.

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- The Georgian State Security Service conducted a large-scale counter-terrorism operation in Tbilisi in November last year, when the Islamic State terrorist Achmed Chatayev blew himself up while his two associates were killed

5. Erdogan: Turkey will stand its ground faced with U.S. sanctions - media [Reuters]

- Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey will stand its ground after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to slap sanctions on Ankara if it does not free an American pastor, broadcaster Haberturk reported on Sunday.
- The friendship between the United States and Turkey is on the line in this dispute, Erdogan was quoted by TRT Haber and other media.
- “We will not take a step back when faced with sanctions,” Erdogan is quoted as saying. “They should not forget that they will lose a sincere partner.”
- Also from Reuters: Turkey will resort to international arbitration if the United States blocks the sale of F-35 fighter jets to Ankara, President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying by broadcaster Haberturk on Sunday.
- Erdogan also said Turkey had asked for U.S. help in securing the return to Turkey of Turkish citizen Ebru Ozkan, detained in Israel, broadcaster Haberturk reported. [Turkey will apply international arbitration if F-35 jet sales blocked, Erdogan says: Haberturk TV](#)

6. German Islamic State 'education minister' confirmed dead [in Iraq] [Al Araby – UK]

- German security sources confirmed on Friday [July 27] that an Islamic State leader was killed last year during operations to drive the militant group out of the city of Mosul, after a year of conflicting reports of his whereabouts.
- Reda Seyam, whose whereabouts were largely unknown for the past year, was a German citizen of Egyptian origin. He was born in 1960 and had two wives and six children.
- After living in Egypt for 15 years, he left to Syria in 2012 and shortly after joined IS and became the militant group’s education minister.
- Seyam, who was known by the militant group as 'Zul Qarnain', was praised because of his ability to radicalise the education system in Syria and Iraq for IS.
- German authorities refused to comment on his death twice — once in 2014 . . . [and again] during the operation to liberate Mosul from IS last year.

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7. [Egypt: Decapitating terror](#) [Al Ahram – EGY]

- Egyptian security sources have confirmed the death of the Sinai Province commander Mohamed Abdel-Latif Abu Jazr, aka Abu Jafar Al-Maqdisi, during a raid launched by the military in Sheikh Zuweid.
- A Palestinian source appeared to confirm the news: “Mohamed Abu Jazr was a member of Hamas’ Ezzeddin Qassam brigades before he joined a group run by Abdel-Latif Moussa which opposes Hamas and is closer to the jihadist Salafist trend.
- He then infiltrated Sinai where he moved in the circles of jihadist Salafist groups until eventually joining Islamic State [IS].”
- IS was the first to report Abu Jazr’s death via its account on the messaging application Telegram.
- This is the second high-level assassination in IS ranks in Sinai in the last three months. On 18 April Nasser Abu Zaqoul was killed in Central Sinai.

8. [Osama bin Laden's suspected bodyguard Sami A. released from Tunisian prison](#) [Deutsche Welle – DEU/GER – embedded photo]

- Sami A., an alleged former bodyguard for Osama bin Laden, was released from Tunisian prison on Friday, authorities in the capital Tunis announced.
- The 42-year-old Tunisian national was granted provisional release after a judge found that no charges could be brought against him at this time.

9. [\[UK\] Probe over donations to terror-linked group](#) [BBC]

- The Charity Commission is investigating claims the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust gave £275,000 to a group linked to a banned terrorist organisation in Northern Ireland.
- The Times [newspaper] says the trust gave the funds to Teach Na Failte, which supports ex-prisoners but has links to the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA).
- The watchdog said the charity needs to "explain and justify" its decision.
- The trust says it has "no relationship with any proscribed organisations".
- Critics argue that Teach na Failte is too closely linked with the INLA, a republican paramilitary group . . . responsible for more than 120 murders from its formation in 1975 until its ceasefire in 1998.

10. [Turkish police remand 28 Daesh suspects in Istanbul](#) [Yenisafak – TUR]

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- Turkish security forces remanded 28 suspects in counterterrorism operations in Istanbul for alleged links to the Daesh terrorist network.
- Teams from Istanbul police's counter-terrorism branch carried out simultaneous operations at 14 addresses across nine districts of the city.
- From Anadolu Agency – Turkey: A wanted PKK/PYD terrorist, Kava Muhammed Bayram, has been arrested in southeast Turkey on Saturday afternoon
- Bayram illegally entered Turkey from Syria, and was nabbed in a joint operation by Gaziantep and Mersin Provincial Gendarmerie Command units [Wanted PKK terrorist nabbed in southeast Turkey](#)

11. [Two Gazans killed by overnight Israeli airstrikes: Palestinian health ministry](#) [i24 – ISR]

- The Palestinian health ministry in the Gaza Strip said early Sunday that an Israeli airstrike killed two men east of the Jabaliya refugee camp overnight.
- The strike targeted a group of men gathered next to a cemetery, local media reported.
- The Israeli Defense Forces has yet to comment on the reports.
- Update from Jerusalem Post 0430 EST: [IDF denies carrying out drone strike that killed 2 Gazans](#)

12. [Six Houthi leaders among hundreds killed in al-Malahiz in Saada](#) [Yemen] [Al Arabiya]

- Al-Arabiya correspondent in Yemen reported on Friday . . . that the Yemeni . . . coalition forces . . . succeeded in killing six Houthi leaders in the Al-Malahiz Front in Saada.
- Those killed are the leader of the Houthi Abdo Jubran Ali Ghalis, the leader Mohammed Abdullah Al-Hazeq, Abed Mohammed Shubla, Mohammed Qasim Al-Shami, Abdul Majid Abdullah Alwani and the leader Dale Hussein Khammash.
- From Reuters: A Saudi-led coalition launched heavy air strikes on Yemen's main port city of Hodeidah on Friday, in an apparent resumption of military operations on the city after the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement attacked two Saudi oil tankers
- The coalition on July 1 halted an attack on the Houthi-held city to aid U.N. efforts at a political solution [Saudi-led coalition renews strikes on Yemen's main port city](#)

13. [Haftar's forces say they have captured Libyan city of Derna](#) [Al Arabiya via Reuters]

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- Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar declared victory on Thursday against rivals including local fighters and Islamists in the city of Derna, the last bastion of opposition against him in the east of the country.
- Taking Derna, a city of 125,000 about 265 km (165 miles) west of Libya's border with Egypt, marks an important step for Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) as it tries to consolidate its power.
- It was not possible to independently verify the extent of LNA control in central Derna, where the LNA's rivals had been holding out.
- The victory announcement followed clashes in the city on Thursday and heavy airstrikes against the LNA's opponents, military sources said.

14. Officials: 3 killed in attack in Afghanistan's Nangarhar [AP]

- At least three people were killed after a suicide bomber detonated his explosives vest, paving the way for another attacker to charge into a training center for midwives in the capital of Nangarhar province, a provincial official said on Saturday.
- . . . seven others, including three security forces, two civilians and two government employees, were wounded in the attack in Jalalabad city . . .
- The second attacker was not able to detonate his explosives vest and was shot by security forces.
- No one immediately claimed responsibility . . . , but both Taliban insurgents and fighters from the local affiliate of the Islamic State group are active in eastern Afghanistan, especially in Nangarhar.

15. Egypt court sentences 75 to death over 2013 sit-in [AP]

- An Egyptian court sentenced 75 people [44 jailed; 31 at large] to death on Saturday, including top figures of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group, for their involvement in a 2013 sit-in, state media reported
- The Cairo Criminal Court referred the sentences to the Grand Mufti — the country's top theological authority — for his non-binding opinion as is the norm in capital cases.
- Of the 75 defendants referred to the Mufti, 44 are jailed and 31 are at large. The court normally hands down the maximum sentence for fugitives but a re-trial is typically held after they are caught.
- The case involves a total 739 defendants, including the Muslim Brotherhood's Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie . . .

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- The 2013 [Cairo] sit-in . . . supported former Islamist [Muslim Brotherhood] President Mohammed Morsi who was militarily ousted . . .

16. [Nigeria brings in fourth commander in 14 months to lead fight against Boko Haram](#) [Reuters]

- Nigeria has named its fourth commander in 14 months to lead the fight against the Islamist Boko Haram insurgency, a move sources say comes after a series of embarrassing military defeats.
- The reverses could hurt President Muhammadu Buhari's chances of re-election in Feb. 2019.
- He campaigned in 2015 vowing to end the insurgency but the war is entering its 10th year and the humanitarian crisis it has spawned show little sign of ending.
- The appointment of Major General A.M. Dikko is "aimed at injecting new hands to further actualise the vision of the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Yusufu Buratai," an army spokesman said in a statement.
- It did not say what had happened to Rogers Nicholas, the commander since December.

17. [Newest U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan Mirrors Past Plans for Retreat](#) [MSN via New York Times]

- The Trump administration is urging American-backed Afghan troops to retreat from sparsely populated areas of the country, officials said, all but ensuring the Taliban will remain in control of vast stretches of the country.
- The approach is outlined in a previously undisclosed part of the war strategy that President Trump announced last year, according to three officials who described the documents . . . on the condition of anonymity.
- It is meant to protect military forces from attacks at isolated and vulnerable outposts, and focuses on protecting cities such as Kabul, the capital, and other population centers.
- The withdrawal resembles strategies embraced by both the Bush and Obama administrations that have started and stuttered over the nearly 17-year war.

18. [Inside Indonesia's secret school for the children of terrorism](#) [ABC – AUS – embedded photos]

- Ayu is one of 11 children undergoing deradicalisation at the school. One of her classmates, a seven-year-old boy, lost his father in a shoot-out with counter-terrorism police.
- Three other students became orphans when a bomb their father was building accidentally detonated in their Surabaya apartment, the same day the city's police HQ was targeted.

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- In another classroom, a 16-year-old bomb-maker and a wannabe suicide bomber, also 16, were mixed in with street brawlers, thieves and child prostitutes.
- The location of the school was a secret. Several undercover guards patrol its boundaries, with dozens more on hand should an incident occur.
- So far 102 children considered radical have come through the school. Most of them have now returned to their communities, having undergone rehabilitation.

(U//FOUO) This document is tracked by HSEC Codes: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9, and 8.10.

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CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention and Information Center



Counterterrorism Section

Daily Awareness and Homeland Security Brief

30 July 2018

TLO Area North Meeting
25th District, 5555 W. Grand
August 28, at 1700-1900hrs

On This Date

1997, Israel: Double suicide attack kills 16 and wounds 150 in Jerusalem; HAMAS responsible.

Special Events

AACC Annual Meeting and Clinical Lab Expo
McCormick Place North & South Buildings
1000-1800hrs

Summer Music Series
Millennium Park
1830hrs

Foo Fighters
Wrigley Field
1900hrs

LOLLAPALOOZA
02-05 August 2018
1100-2200hrs

Public Gatherings

018th District

Wednesday, 01 August 2018, 1200-1300 Hours, Rally, 400 N. Michigan Avenue. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "Come Sit with Her! (Comfort Women)"

011th & 012th Districts

Thursday, 02 August 2018, 1330-1500 Hours, March & Rally, Crane High School - 2245 W. Jackson Boulevard to Marillac Social Center - 2859 W. Jackson Boulevard. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "After School Noah's Arc Foundation Peace March."

019th District

Thursday, 02 August 2018, 1600 Hours, Protest & March, Belmont & Lake Shore Drive to Wrigley Field - 1060 W. Addison Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "#LakeShoreDriveShutdown & #March2WrigleyField."

009th District

Friday, 03 August 2018, 1700-1800 Hours, March, Gunsaulus Academy - 4420 S. Sacramento Avenue. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "Increase the Peace Brighton Park."

002nd District

Saturday, 04 August 2018, 0900-1700 Hours, Assembly, 5500 S. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "Israel United in Christ."

001st District

Saturday, 04 August 2018, 1200 Hours, Demonstration, City Hall - 121 N. LaSalle Street. The group will assemble regarding their national campaign "March on the NRA - Chicago's Die-In."

017th District

Sunday, 05 August 2018, 0600-1400 Hours, Parade, 2800-3400 W. Montrose Avenue. 2018 Ecuadorian Parade. The parade will step-off at 1200 hours.

001st District

Wednesday, 08 August 2018, 1630-1830 Hours, Rally, Thompson Center - 100 W. Randolph Street. The group will assemble regarding their campaign "(Immigration) Safe Zones Rally: Gov. Rauner, SIGN SB 35!"

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It should be noted that some of this information describes First Amendment protected activities. The CPIC recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The CPIC safeguards these rights and only reports on First Amendment protected activities for operational planning in the interest of assuring the safety and security of the public including demonstrators and public safety personnel. The CPIC will continue to communicate these events with other law enforcement partners in an effort to facilitate the Chicago Police Department's mission of protecting the lives, property and rights of all people, to maintain order, and enforce the law impartially. For comments or questions contact the CPIC at 312-745-5669 or CPIC @ChicagoPolice.org.

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention and Information Center



Counterterrorism Section

Daily Awareness and Homeland Security Brief

30 July 2018

Upcoming Special Events

St. Gall Kermes – 02 – 05 August @ 5147 S. Kedzie Ave.

Our Lady of Snow Parish Carnival – 02- 05 August @ 4810 S. Leamington Ave.

Revival Chicago – 01-12 August @ 1924 W. 63rd St.

Jeff Fest Art and Music Festival-03-05 August @ 5400 W. Lawrence Ave.

Old Irving Park Beer & BBQ Challenge – 04 August @ 3644 N. Kedvale

Chicago Friday Night Flights – 03 August @ 4702 – 4720 N. Ravenswood Ave.

St. Jeromes Kermes Street Fest – 03-05 August @ 6940 -7000 N. Paulina Street

Belize Day in the Park – 05 August @ 3900 S. Lake Shore Drive – Grove 7

St. Kevin Church – Kevinfest – 04 August @ 10509 S. Torrence Ave.

Unclassified / For Official Use Only

It should be noted that some of this information describes First Amendment protected activities. The CPIC recognizes that Americans have constitutionally protected rights to assemble, speak, and petition the government. The CPIC safeguards these rights and only reports on First Amendment protected activities for operational planning in the interest of assuring the safety and security of the public including demonstrators and public safety personnel. The CPIC will continue to communicate these events with other law enforcement partners in an effort to facilitate the Chicago Police Department's mission of protecting the lives, property and rights of all people, to maintain order, and enforce the law impartially. For comments or questions contact the CPIC at 312-745-5669 or CPIC @ChicagoPolice.org.

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Prevention and Information Center



Counterterrorism Section

Daily Awareness and Homeland Security Brief

30 July 2018

Media Reporting

(U) 14 ISIS Members Reportedly Killed In Nangarhar Province

Up to 14 militants affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS) group have been killed in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province and 20 others have given up fighting and handed over their weapons to police in the northern Jawzjan province. According to a spokesman, 14 fighters of ISIS group were killed in Haska Mina, Ghani Khil, Nazian and Achin districts. During the operations, several more ISIS fighters have been injured, the official added. Confirming the operations, the National Army Corps in the eastern region said that a weapons cache had also been destroyed during the ongoing operations. Source: Xinhua

(U) D.C. Police Camera Hackers Reportedly Planned Ransomware Scheme

When hackers took over two-thirds of the Washington, D.C., police department's surveillance cameras days before the 2017 presidential inauguration, it appeared the cyberattack was limited to elicit a single ransom payment. But court documents show the alleged scheme that January was far more ambitious. Federal authorities say two Romanians accused in the hacking planned to use the police department computers to email ransomware to more than 179,000 accounts. That would have allowed them to extort those users and use D.C. government computers to hide their digital tracks. Prosecutors said the alleged hackers had also stolen banking credentials and account passwords, and, using the police computers, could have committed "fraud schemes with anonymity." Source: The Washington Post

(U) ISIS Supporters Push PayPal as "Secure" Money Transfer Method

PayPal was promoted as a safe payment method in prominent Islamic State (ISIS/IS) chat groups geared toward Western supporters. The alert warns ISIS supporters not to contribute to social media fundraisers and to avoid bank account transfers, cautioning "everything is monitored" and that involvement will lead to imprisonment, particularly for Europeans. Source: SITE Intelligence Group

(U) Inside Indonesia's Secret School For The Children Of Terrorism

Ayu is one of 11 children undergoing deradicalization at the school. One of her classmates, a seven-year-old boy, lost his father in a shoot-out with counterterrorism police. Three other students became orphans when a bomb their father was building accidentally detonated in their Surabaya apartment, the same day the city's police HQ was targeted. The location of the school was a secret. Several undercover guards patrol its boundaries, with dozens more on hand should an incident occur. So far 102 children considered radical have come through the school. Most of them have now returned to their communities, having undergone rehabilitation. Sources: ABC-AUS

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Morning Brief

Monday, July 30, 2018

WATER ADVISORY – Parchment City, MI



SPOT Report: Michigan-Kalamazoo County- Water Advisory-07272018- Initial

Parchment City, MI residents were told to stop using tap water after high levels of PFAS were found in the public system.

MI SEOC is at Full Activation

- No unmet needs reported by the state
- On July 29, 2018, the Michigan Lt. Governor issued a State of Disaster opening up state resources in support of the Parchment Township water contamination issue.

Advisory applies to Parchment City & Cooper Township

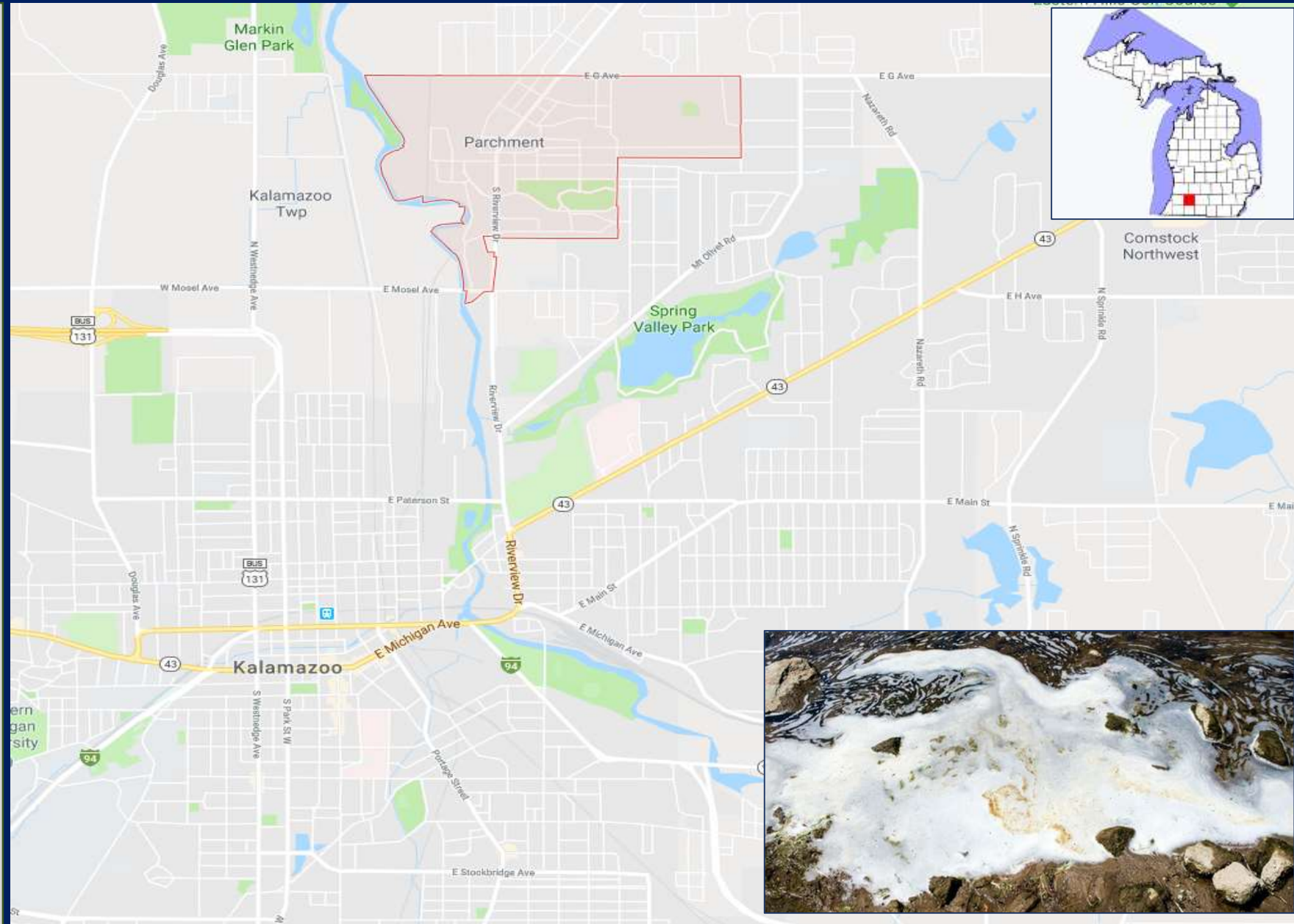
- About 3,000 people affected

PFAS levels are said to be 20x the level considered safe

- Per- & Polyfluorinated compounds (PFAS)
- Risks of cancer, kidney disease, thyroid conditions, & auto-immune disorders

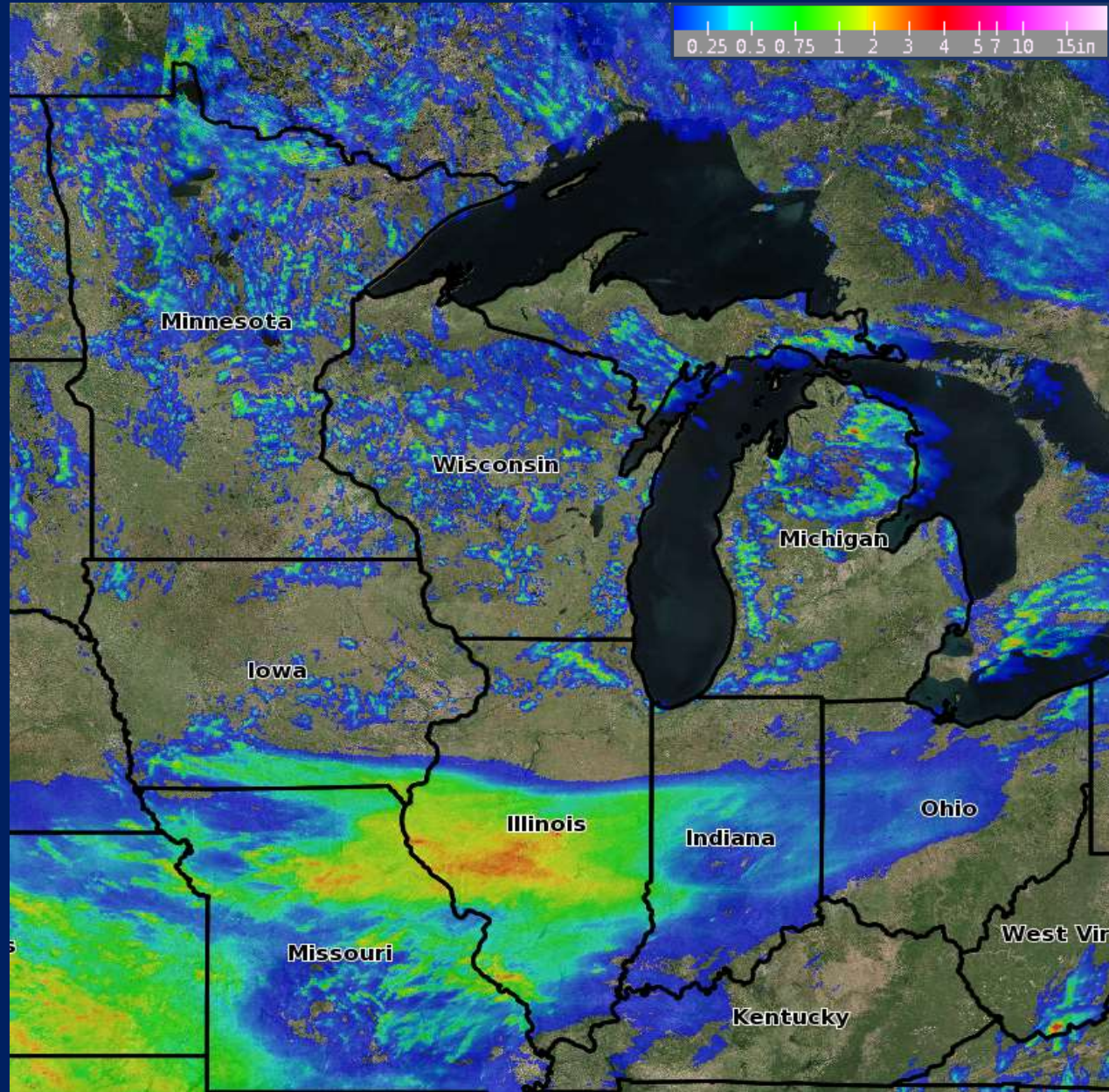
Bottled water will begin being provided this morning

- Boiling will not eliminate the chemical from water

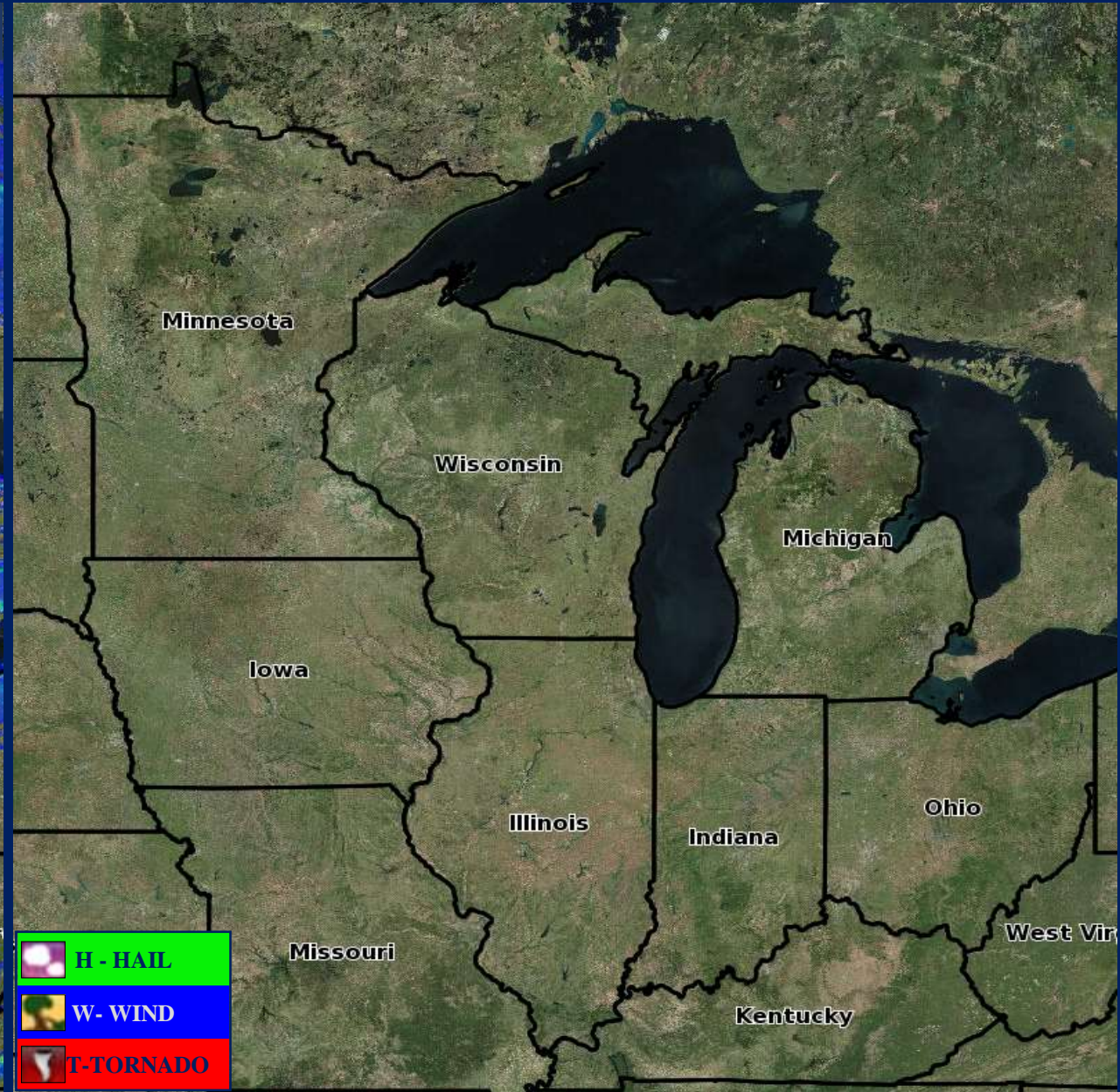


WEATHER SUMMARY (Last 24 Hours)

PRECIPITATION



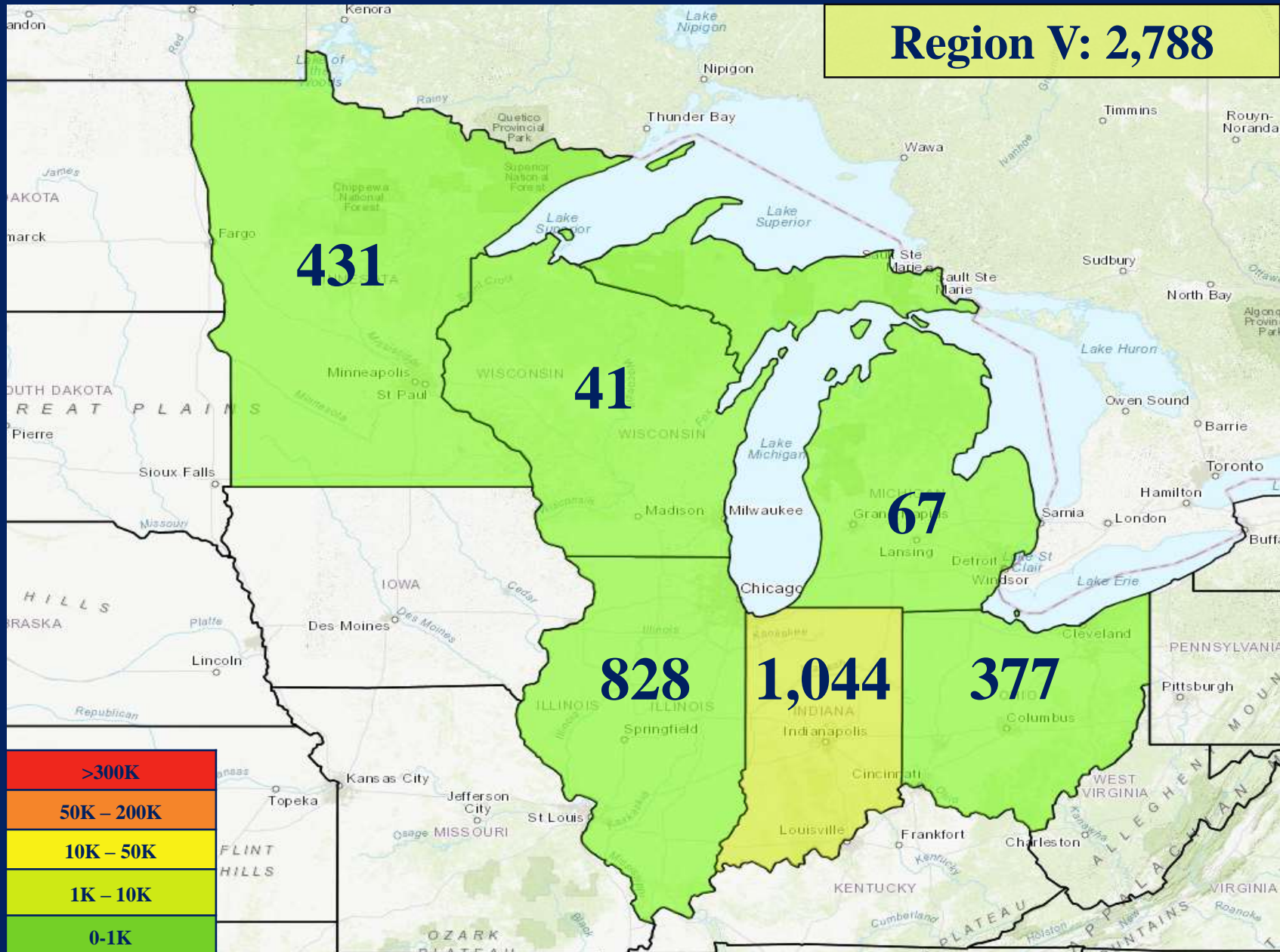
STORM REPORTS



INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS

POWER OUTAGES

CONDITIONS & THREATS



	AIRPORT STATUS	ROADWAY STATUS	NUCLEAR FACILITIES		
IL					
IN					
MI					
MN					
OH					
WI					
EXCESSIVE		MASS FLOODING	GENERAL EMGY		
SIGNIFICANT		FLOODING	SITE AREA EMGY		
MODERATE		SNOW/ICE	ALERT		
LOW		DEBRIS	UNUSUAL EVENT		
NORMAL		NORMAL	NORMAL		
GEOMAGNETIC STORMS		SOLAR RADIATION STORMS	RADIO BLACKOUTS		
DAY 1	None	S1 or GREATER	1%	R1 – R2	1%
				R3 – R5	1%
DAY 2	None	S1 or GREATER	1%	R1 – R2	1%
				R3 – R5	1%
G5 EXTREME		S5 EXTREME	R5 EXTREME		
G4 SEVERE		S4 SEVERE	R4 SEVERE		
G3 STRONG		S3 STRONG	R3 STRONG		
G2 MODERATE		S2 MODERATE	R2 MODERATE		
G1 MINOR		S1 MINOR	R1 MINOR		

REGION V READINESS



OPERATIONS STATUS

RRCC	NORMAL OPERATIONS
RWC	WATCH / STEADY STATE
IMAT	AVAILABLE
DCE	AVAILABLE
LNO	AVAILABLE
NTAS	NO ACTIVE ALERTS

STATE OPERATIONS STATUS

ILLINOIS	NORMAL OPERATIONS
INDIANA	NORMAL OPERATIONS
MICHIGAN	FULL OPERATIONS
MINNESOTA	NORMAL OPERATIONS
OHIO	NORMAL OPERATIONS
WISCONSIN	NORMAL OPERATIONS

THIS WEEK

TRAINING & EXERCISES

NEXT WEEK

TRAINING:

- **Jul 30:** Procurement Standards Training; Chicago, IL
- **Aug 16:** Managing Multiple Projects, Objectives and Deadlines; Chicago, IL
- **Aug 20:** L0583 Overview of EM for Tribal Leaders; Shelbyville, MI
- **Aug 22-23:** FERS/CRCS Retirement Course; Chicago, IL
- **Aug 24:** L0583 Overview of EM for Tribal Leaders; Cass Lake, MN
- **Aug 27-29:** L141 Instructional Presentation and Evaluation Skills; Chicago, IL
- **Aug 28-30:** L426 Building a Roadmap to Resilience; Columbus, OH
- **Sep 5:** AWR-351 REP Ingestion Core Concepts; South Bend, IN
- **Sep 11:** Active Shooter / Active Violence Prevention; Chicago, IL
- **Sep 18-20:** Project Management Principles; Chicago, IL

EXERCISES:

- **Aug 7:** LaSalle REPEX, Illinois
- **Aug 28:** Fermi REPEX, Michigan
- **Sep 11:** Great Lakes Radiant Response, Senior Leader TTX, Chicago, IL

DISASTER DECLARATION STATUS

PDA SUMMARY:

	Event	Event Date	Type	Requested	Completed	Start/End
MN	Flooding	6/15-7/8/2018	PA	28	2	7/19/2018 – TBD
				3 Tribes	0	7/19/2018 - TBD

DECLARATION REQUESTS:

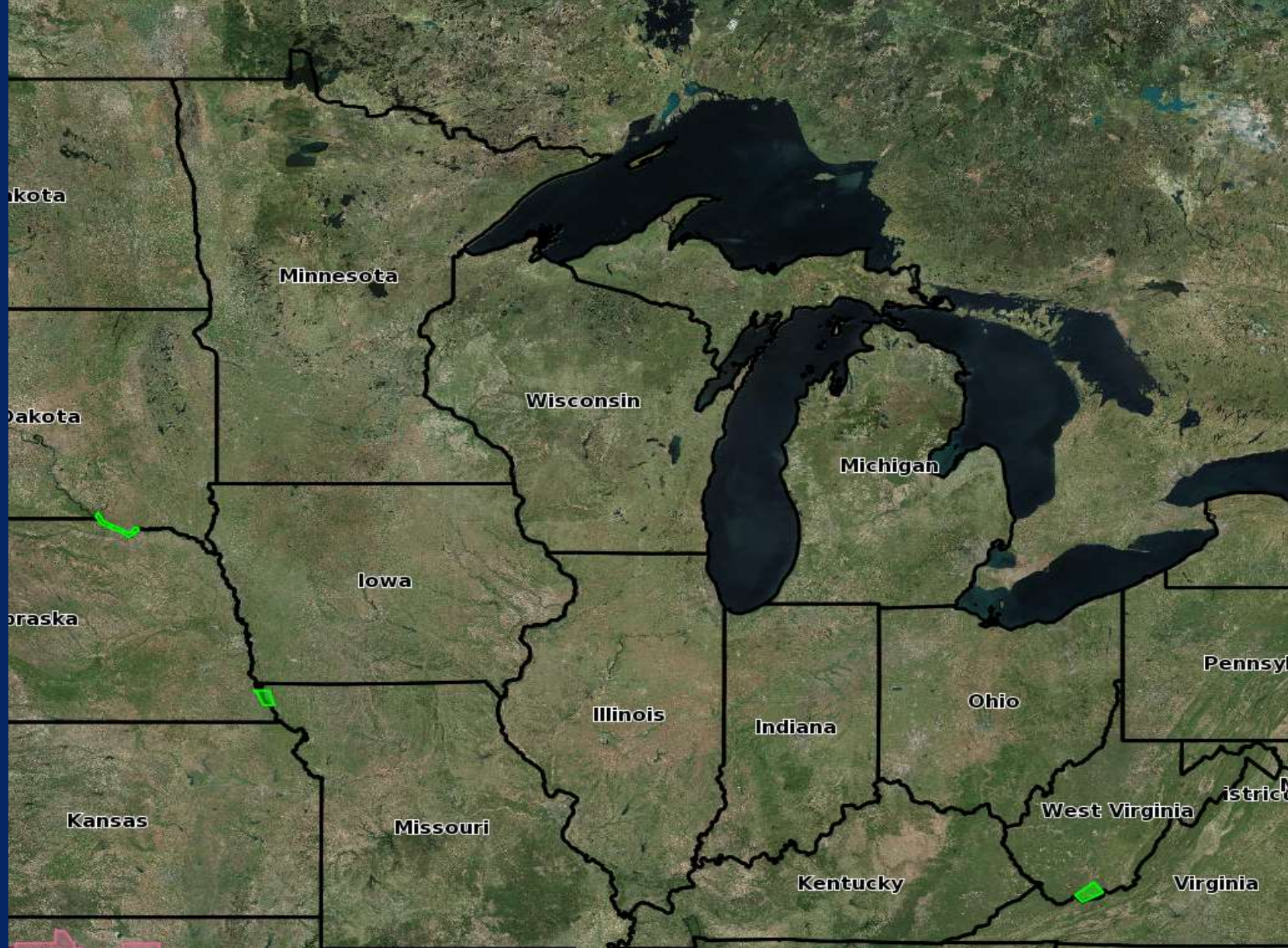
- On July 9, 2018, the Governor of Michigan requested a Major Disaster Declaration as a result of severe flooding and mudslides during the period of June 16-17. The Governor is requesting Individual and Public Assistance for three (3) counties and Hazardous Mitigation statewide. The request is in process.
- On July 20, 2018, the Governor of Wisconsin requested a Major Disaster Declaration as a result of severe storms, flooding, and straight-line winds during the period of June 15-19, 2018. The Governor is requesting Public Assistance for six (6) counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The request is in process.

DECLARATIONS:

- **FEMA-4363-DR-IN.** On May 4, 2018, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Indiana as a result of severe storms and flooding during the period of February 14-March 4, 2018. Individual Assistance for nine (9) counties, Public Assistance for 27 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The FCO is David Samaniego.
 - Amendment #1: On June 5, 2018, thirteen (13) counties were added for Individual Assistance.
 - Amendment #2: On June 5, 2018, one (1) county was added for Public Assistance.
- **FEMA-4360-DR-OH.** On April 17, 2018, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Ohio as a result of severe storms, flooding, and landslides during the period February 14-25. It provides Public Assistance for 18 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide.. The FCO is Steven Johnson.
 - Amendment #1: On May 24, 2018, four (4) counties were added for Public Assistance.

CURRENT WEATHER

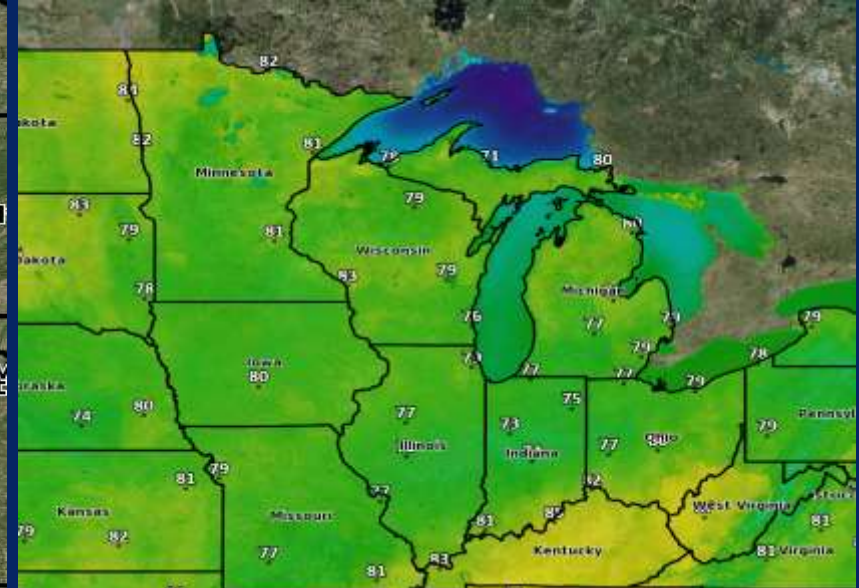
WATCHES & WARNINGS



RADAR



TODAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURE

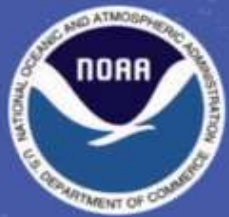
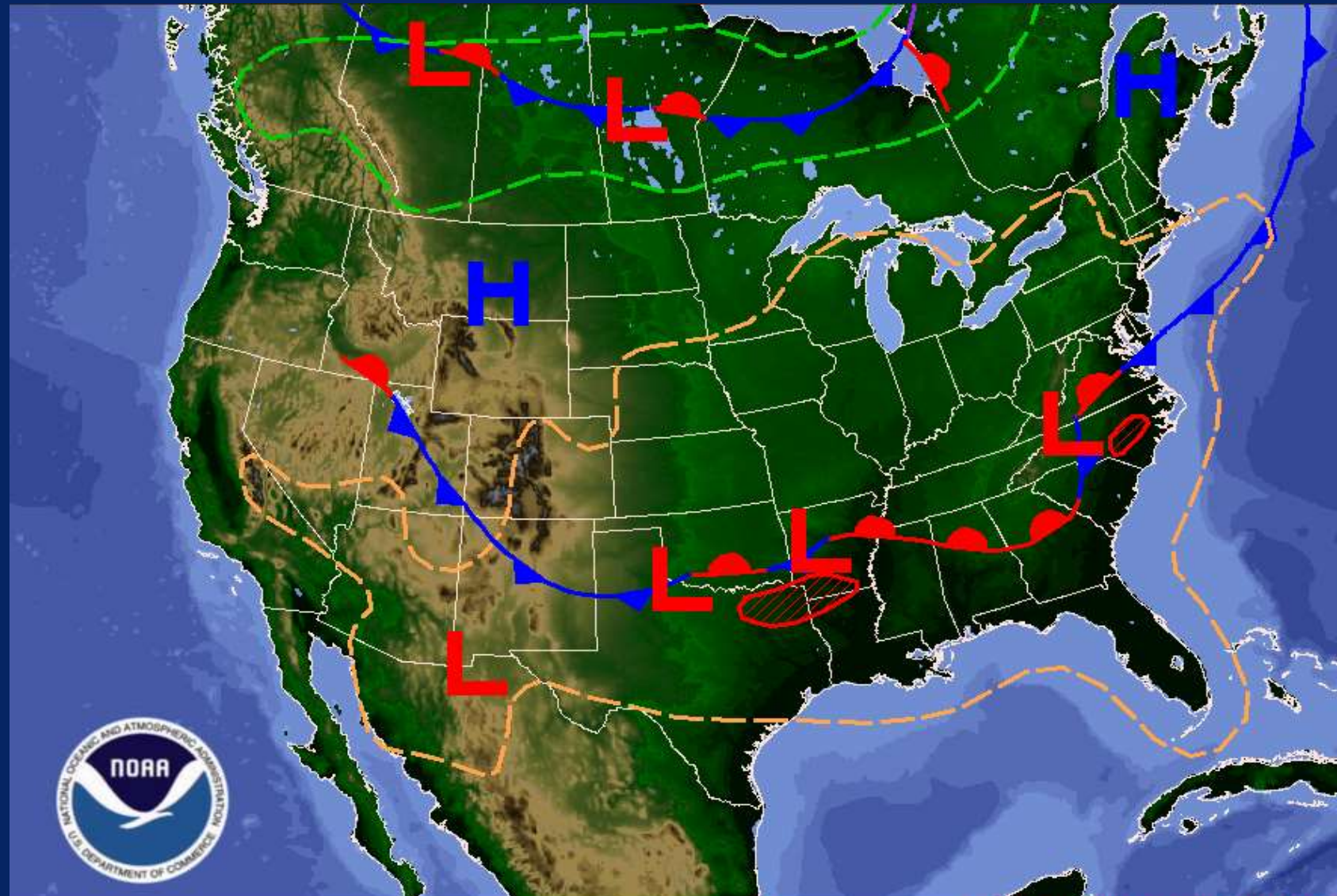


DAY 1 FORECAST

FEMA
REGION V



NATIONAL FORECAST



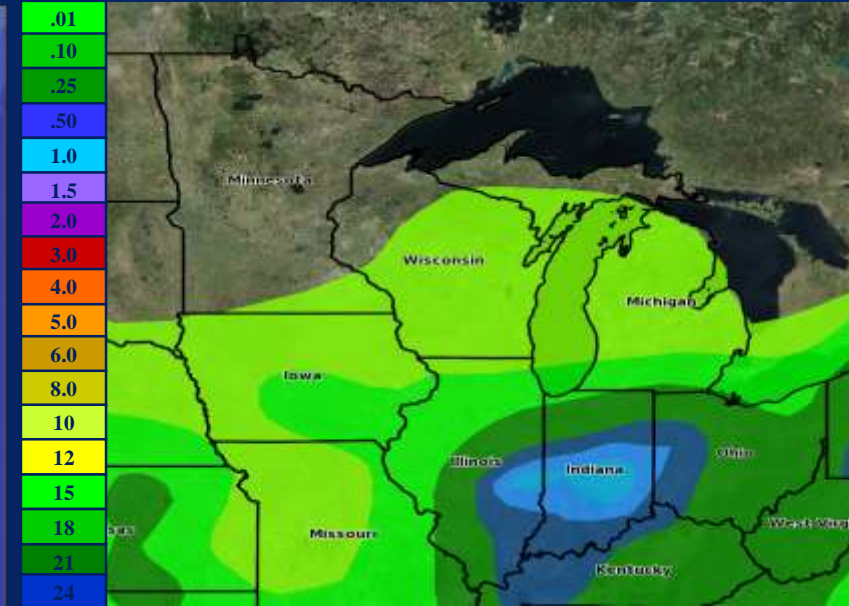
Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Jul 30, 2018, issued 4:50 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

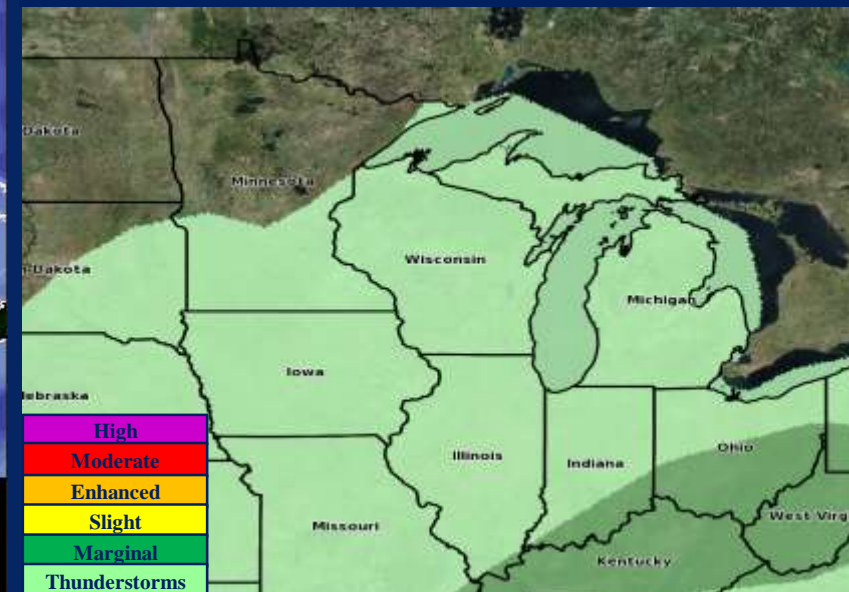
Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

PRECIPITATION

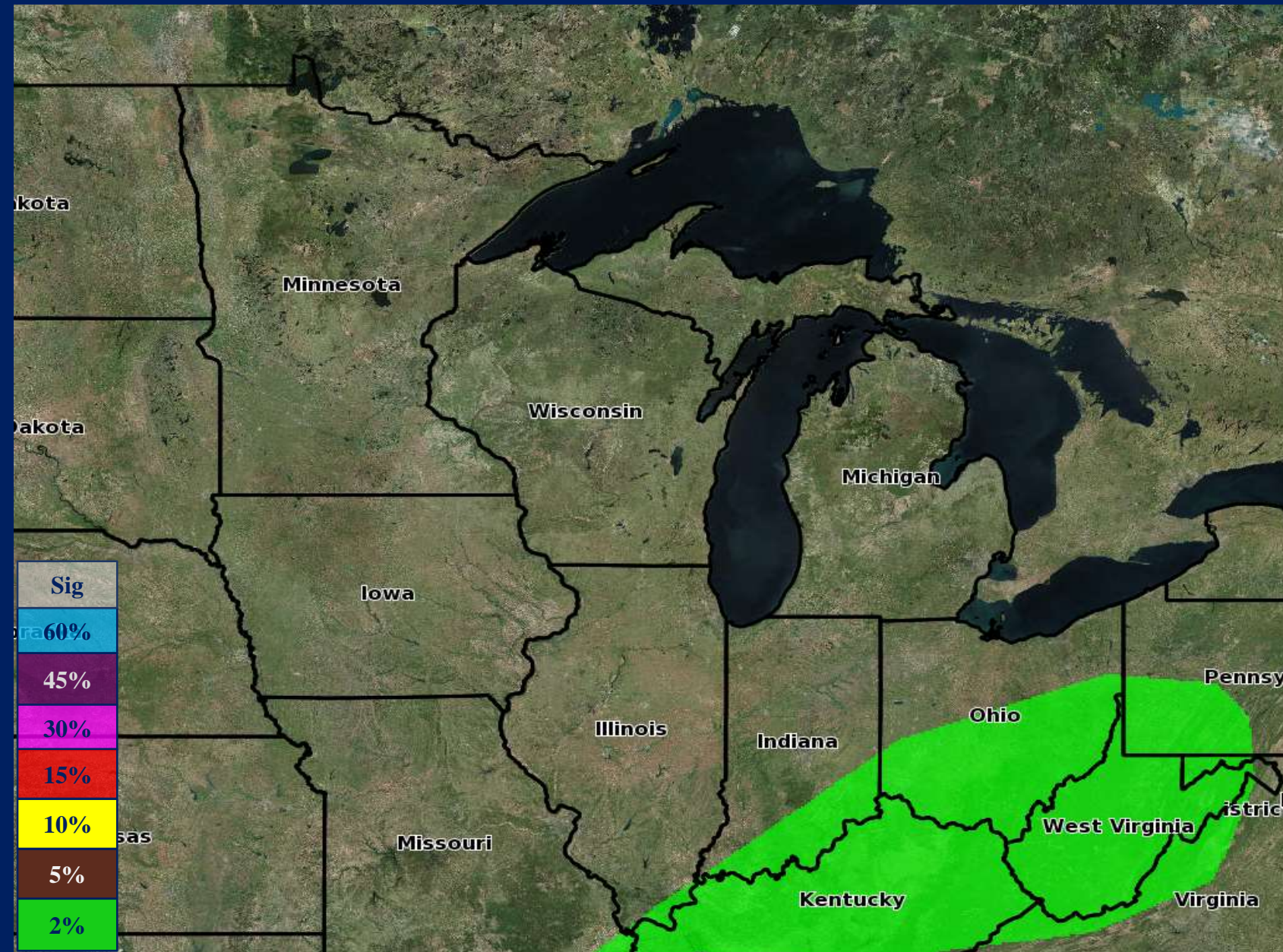


CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK



DAY 1 CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK

TORNADO



WIND

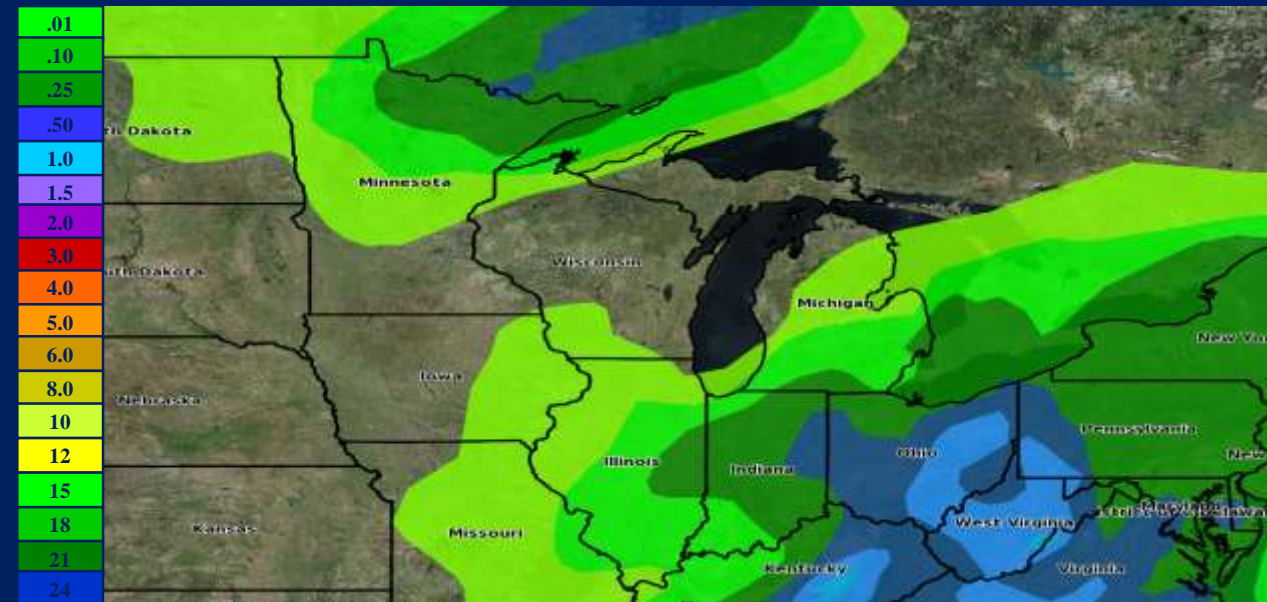


HAIL



DAY 2 & 3 REGIONAL FORECAST

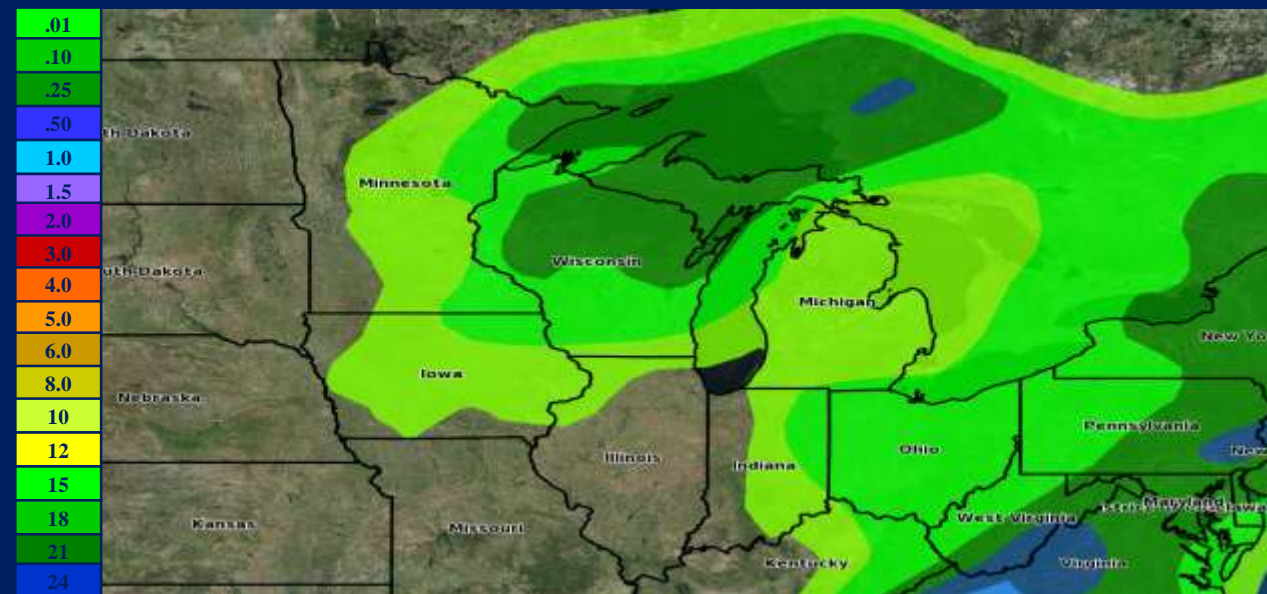
DAY 2 PRECIPITATION



DAY 2 CONVECTIVE



DAY 3 PRECIPITATION



DAY 3 CONVECTIVE

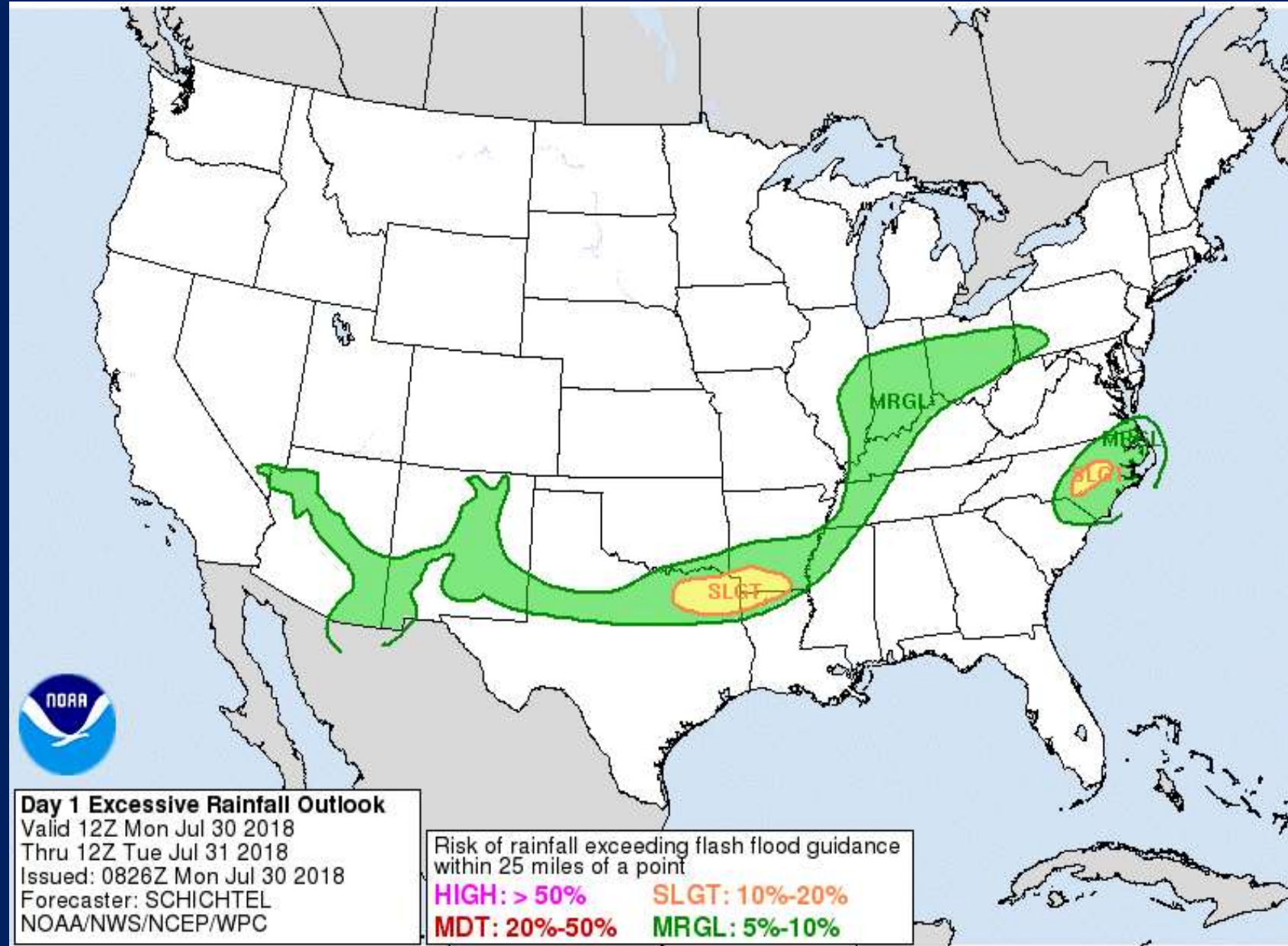


EXCESSIVE RAIN OUTLOOK

FEMA
REGION V



DAY 1

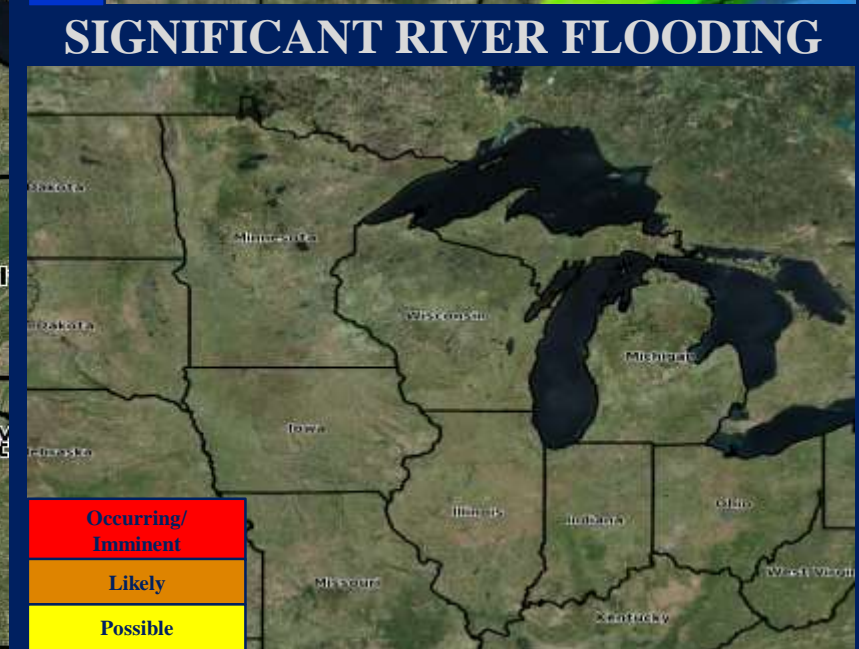
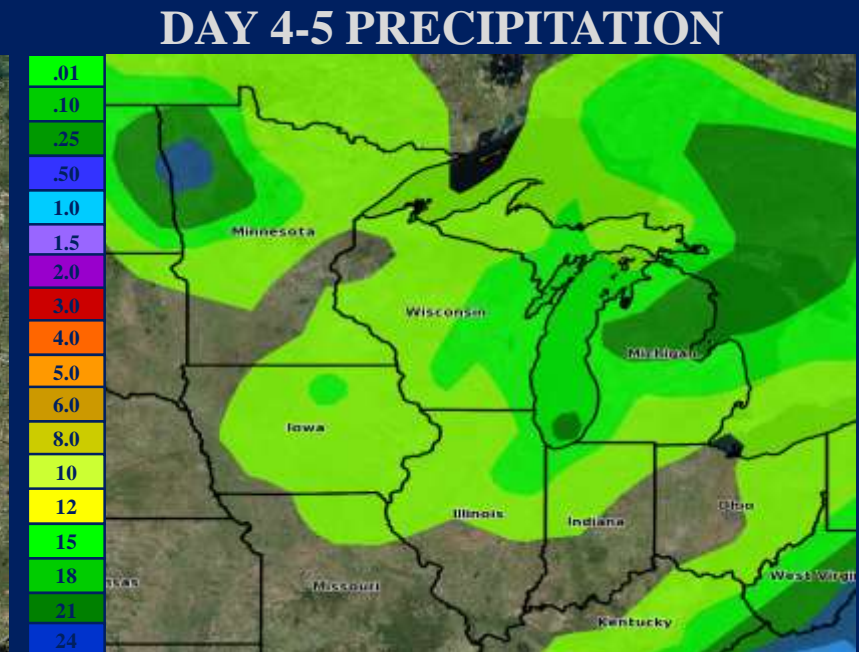
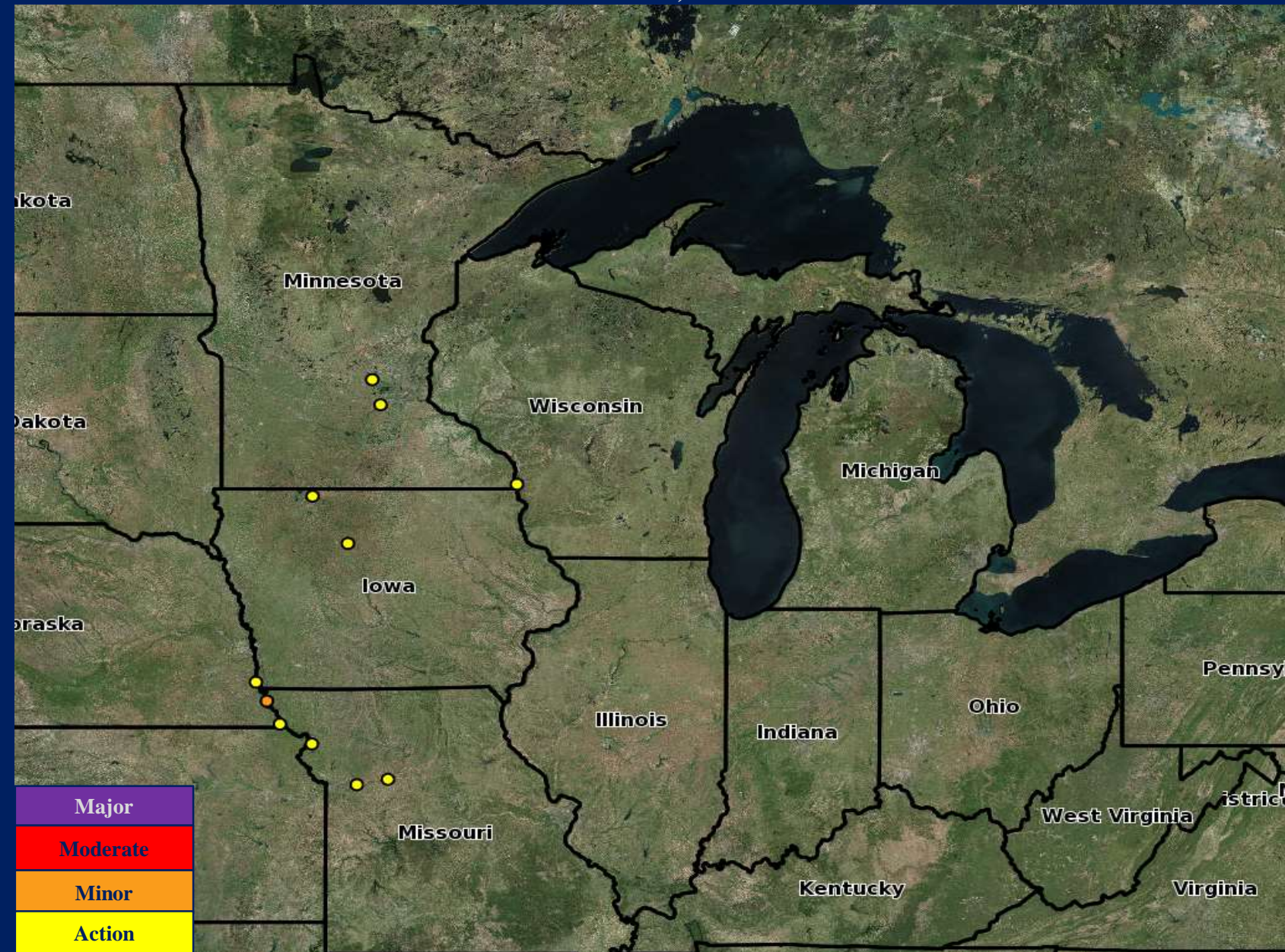


DAY 2



DAY 3





3-7 DAY HAZARDS OUTLOOK



DAY 6-10 TEMPERATURE



DAY 6-10 PRECIPITATION



30 Day Projection for NSSE or SEAR 1, 2, and 3
Special Events in Region V

Event	NSSE / SEAR Level	County/City	State	Daily Attendance	Start Date	End Date
Medina County Fair	SEAR 3	Medina/Medina	Ohio	30,000	July 30	Aug 5
Lollapalooza	SEAR 3	Cook/Chicago	Illinois	65,000	Aug 2	Aug 5
Uptown Art Fair	SEAR 3	Hennepin/Minneapolis	Minnesota	125,000	Aug 3	Aug 5
Gratiot Cruise	SEAR 3	Macomb/Clinton Township	Michigan	140,000	Aug 6	Aug 6
Bud Billikin Parade	SEAR 3	Cook/Chicago	Illinois	1,800,000	Aug 11	Aug 11
Chicago Air & Water Show	SEAR 3	Cook/Chicago	Illinois	1,250,000	Aug 18	Aug 19
Woodward Dream Cruise	SEAR 3	Oakland/Birmingham	Michigan	1,000,000	Aug 18	Aug 18
Brown County Fair	SEAR 3	Brown/Georgetown	Ohio	50,000	Aug 24	Aug 29
Taste of Blue Ash	SEAR 3	Hamilton/Blue Ash	Ohio	100,000	Aug 24	Aug 26
Chicago Marathon	SEAR 2	Cook/Chicago	Illinois	1,500,000	Oct 7	Oct 7

National Special Security Event (NSSE)—Established by Presidential Policy
Special Event Assessment Rating (SEAR)—Established/governed by DHS Policy

FEMA's Mission:
*Helping people before, during, and after
a disaster.*

THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

PREPARED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BY BULLETIN INTELLIGENCE WWW.BULLETININTELLIGENCE.COM/DHS

TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: MONDAY, JULY 30, 2018 5:00 AM EDT

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LEADING DHS NEWS

US Government: Over 1,800 Migrant Kids Reunited By Deadline

By Elliot Spagat, Colleen Long And Anita Snow
[Associated Press](#), July 27, 2018

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Shy children were given a meal and a plane or bus ticket to locations around the U.S. as nonprofit groups tried to smooth the way for kids reunited with their parents following their separations at the U.S. Mexico border.

The Trump administration said Thursday that more than 1,800 children 5 years and older had been reunited with parents or sponsors hours before the deadline. That included

1,442 children who were returned to parents who were in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, and another 378 who were released under a variety of other circumstances.

But about 700 more remain separated, including 431 whose parents were deported, officials say. Those reunions take more time, effort and paperwork as authorities fly children back to Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

On Friday morning, Homeland Security officials said they had reunified all eligible parents with children — but noted many others were not eligible because they have been released from immigration custody, are in their home countries or chose not to be reunited.

Updated figures were not made public, but new data was expected to be released Friday at a court hearing in San Diego held by the judge overseeing the reunification process.

Protesters gathered in Washington Thursday to call on the Trump administration to meet a court-imposed deadline to reunite thousands of children and parents forcibly separated at the U.S.-Mexico border. (July 26)

“The administration will continue to make every effort to reunify eligible adults with their children,” a Homeland Security statement said.

Now the federal judge in San Diego who ordered the reunifications must decide how to address the hundreds of still-separated children whose parents have been deported, as well as how much time, if any, reunified parents should be allowed to file asylum claims.

Lee Gelernt, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union representing separated parents, said Thursday it was unclear how long it might take to find the parents returned to their homelands. “I think it’s just going to be really hard detective work and hopefully we’re going to find them,” he said.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw will also consider the ACLU’s request to give reunified parents at least a week to consider if they wish to seek asylum. The government opposes the waiting period, and Sabraw has put a hold on deporting reunified families while the issue is decided.

On a parallel legal front over treatment of immigrant children, U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee in Los Angeles will be asked Friday to appoint a special monitor to oversee detention facilities.

Children described horrid conditions in a voluminous report filed this month over whether the Trump administration is meeting its obligations under a long-standing settlement governing how young immigrants should be treated in custody.

As the deadline neared, small groups of children were led in and out of Lutheran Social Services in Phoenix all day Thursday, sometimes holding hands with a worker from the center. Children and parents wore matching hospital-like identification bracelets and carried belongings in white plastic

bags. The men sported shoes without laces that were taken away while in immigration detention.

Support worker Julisa Zaragoza said some kids were so afraid of losing their parents again they didn’t want to go to the bathroom alone. “These families have been through a lot,” she said.

The federal government was supposed to reunify more than 2,500 children who were separated from their parents under a new immigration policy designed to deter immigrants from coming here illegally, but the policy backfired amid global outrage over crying children taken from their parents.

President Donald Trump ended the practice of taking children from parents and Sabraw ordered the government to reunite all the families by the end of Thursday, nevertheless indicating some flexibility given the enormity of the effort.

Chris Meekins, the head of the office of the assistant secretary for preparedness and response for Health and Human Services, said the government would continue to reunify families with eligible parents throughout the evening.

In most cases the families are released and the parents typically get ankle-monitoring bracelets and court dates to appear before an immigration judge. Faith-based and other groups have provided meals, clothing, legal advice, plane and bus tickets and even new shoe laces.

A charitable organization called FWD.US, founded by technology leaders including Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Dropbox founder Drew Houston was paying for the airline tickets, the bus tickets and the lodging for all the families newly reunited in the Phoenix area to get them to relatives living all over the United States, said Connie Phillips of Lutheran Social Services. She said a phone company donated 500 mobile phones for the migrants, each with six months of free service.

There were scattered reunions in various locations Thursday, including about 15 in Phoenix, said Phillips. The main immigrant-assistance center in El Paso, Texas, has been receiving about 25 reunified families daily.

Some children who had not seen their parents in weeks or months seemed slow to accept that they would not be abandoned again.

Jose Dolores Munoz, 36, from El Salvador, was reunited with his 7-year-old daughter last Friday, nearly two months after they were separated, but he said his daughter cries when he leaves the house.

“She is afraid,” Munoz said. “Yesterday I left her crying, she is telling me, ‘You are not coming back.’”

Those who remain separated from their children include Lourdes de Leon of Guatemala. She surrendered to authorities at the border and was deported on June 7, while her 6-year-old son, Leo, remained in the U.S.

De Leon said Guatemalan consular officials told her signing a deportation order would be the easiest way to reunite with Leo.

"He is in a shelter in New York," de Leon said. "My baby already had his hearing with a judge who signed his deportation eight days ago. But I still do not know when they are going to return him to me."

At the Lutheran center, Phillips said the parents and kids have opened up as they go through an assessment process with workers. She said the outpouring of donations has been comforting.

"We have seen a lot of people come together over this, we're seeing the best of what Americans can be," she said.

Long reported from Washington and Snow reported from Phoenix. Associated Press writers Roxana Hegeman in Wichita, Kansas, Astrid Galvan in El Paso, Texas, Alan Fram in Washington and Sonia Perez D. in Guatemala City contributed to this report.

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Inside The Trump Administration's Chaotic Effort To Reunite Migrant Families

By Nour Malas And Alicia A. Caldwell

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

U.S. Says Data On Separated Families Not Readily Available: Court Filings

By Reade Levinson And Kristina Cooke

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Judge Urges U.S. To Focus On Reuniting Deported Parents With Children

By Marty Graham, Tom Hals, And Reade Levinson

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Judge Credits, Faults Administration On Family Reunification

By Elliot Spagat, Colleen Long And Amy Taxin

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A federal judge commended the Trump administration for reunifying families in its custody with their children after being separated at the U.S.-Mexico border, while faulting it for leaving hundreds of families still apart and warning that a better system must be in place.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw said the government gets "great credit" after reunifying more than 1,800 children 5 and over with parents or sponsors by Thursday's court-imposed deadline.

He pointed out that many of the families were reunited while in custody then turned his attention to 431 children whose parents have been deported.

"The government is at fault for losing several hundred parents in the process and that's where we go next," the judge said.

Sabraw ordered the government and the American Civil Liberties Union, which represents the parents, to submit written updates every Thursday on still-separated families.

The order signaled slightly looser oversight than Sabraw imposed last month with frequent hearings to make sure his deadline was met.

In late June, the judge gave the government 14 days to reunify children under 5 and 30 days to reunite children 5 and older with their families.

Sabraw said the "problem" could not be repeated, describing how Homeland Security, Health and Human Services and Justice departments didn't have a system to keep track of the families that were separated when the administration introduced a "zero tolerance" policy toward illegal entry.

"Each (department) was like its own stovepipe, each had its own boss, and they did not communicate," he said. "What was lost in the process was the family."

Sabraw didn't rule immediately on a request by the ACLU to give parents a week to decide whether or not to seek asylum after the group is notified that the family is reunited. As a result, a temporary halt on deportations remained in place.

Earlier Friday, Homeland Security officials said they had reunified all eligible parents with children — but noted many others were not eligible because they had been released from immigration custody, are in their home countries or chose not to be reunited.

More than 1,800 children 5 and older had been reunited with parents or sponsors as of Thursday. That included 1,442 children who were returned to parents who were in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, and another 378 who were released under a variety of other circumstances.

On a parallel legal front, a federal judge in Los Angeles said Friday that she will appoint an independent monitor to evaluate conditions for immigrant children in U.S. border facilities in Texas following a spate of reports of spoiled food, insufficient water and frigid conditions faced by the youngsters and their parents.

Judge Dolly M. Gee said she reached her decision after seeing a "disconnect" between U.S. government monitors' assessment of conditions in facilities in Texas' Rio Grande

Valley and the accounts of more than 200 immigrant children and their parents detailing numerous problems.

"It seems like there continue to be persistent problems," she said during a hearing on a longstanding settlement in a case focusing on the care of children in government custody. "I need to appoint an independent monitor to give me an objective viewpoint about what is going on at the facilities."

Peter Schey, an attorney who represents immigrant children detained by the U.S. government, said problems have worsened with children now spending three to six days in U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities, where they were previously held one to three days.

"We've seen an intensification with all the chaos the administration has caused," said Schey, who has long requested an independent monitor.

Sarah Fabian, a Justice Department attorney, opposed the appointment without having an opportunity to respond to the accounts of children and parents collected by immigrant advocates at facilities in June and July. She said border authorities, for example, provide water fountains and jugs in cells and that facility conditions must comply with agency policies.

Both sides have until Aug. 10 to agree on a proposed monitor. If they can't, each will make suggestions to the judge and she will choose.

Long reported from Washington and Taxin reported from Los Angeles.

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Hundreds Of Migrant Kids In U.S. Limbo Have No Clear Path Forward

By Jennifer Epstein , Patricia Hurtado , And Kartikay Mehrotra

[Bloomberg News](#), July 27, 2018

The Trump administration declared it met a judge's deadline to reunify immigrant children taken from their parents, but left out a quarter of the separated families it initially agreed to reconnect.

In all, 711 children are in limbo as federal authorities have categorized their parents "not eligible" or "not available" to be reunited. More than half those children are associated with adults who have left the U.S., either having been deported or having agreed to leave the country. In other cases, parents may have a serious criminal record or signed documents giving up the right to get their children back.

While the government said it's fulfilled all legal obligations reuniting about 1,400 of the 2,500 children separated and releasing almost 400 more, it may yet have lots of work ahead as it faces the aftermath of its now-defunct

"zero tolerance" policy at the border. The process so far has been almost entirely dictated by a federal judge in San Diego.

The American Civil Liberties Union said it has no way of verifying the government's claims that it rematched all eligible families or why some couldn't be reunited. The group asked U.S. District Court Judge Dana Sabraw to demand transparency and accountability as hundreds of children remained in custody hours before the court deadline Thursday. False Pretenses?

The ACLU also said it is trying to locate 468 parents who it said were deported under the false pretense that they'd be reunited with their children along the way. It asked Sabraw to once again order the government to reunite those families.

Chris Meekins, an official with the Department of Health and Human Services, said the agency "worked really collaboratively with the judge" to meet his deadlines.

Sabraw, who ordered the reunions and has commended the process of reunification and the government's efforts, has shown flashes of frustration with the U.S. precisely for that reason: it seemed to fulfill its obligations for information only as court-ordered deadlines approached. 'Cruel' Policy

The Departments of Homeland Security and HHS first raced to return about 100 children under the age of five to their parents by July 10. Only about 60 percent had been reunified as of the government's most recent disclosure.

Then the U.S. turned to the group of older children. That number, initially set at 2,551, declined as the government exempted some kids by classifying them as ineligible.

"The government has adopted this tone in court that 'We're very proud of the work we've done on reunification' and 'We're acting in good faith,'" said Lee Gelernt, the lead lawyer representing the ACLU. "But because of their past practices in this case they should be pronouncing 'We created this cruel inhuman policy and now we're doing everything we can do.' This is a disaster they created."

Sabraw began in recent hearings to voice concerns about the fate of those not yet reunified, especially the children whose parents were deported. Gelernt indicated that once the July 26 deadline passed, he would push for more information about the parents who haven't been reconnected with their children. No Process

In the meantime, there's uncertainty and no official process to rematch "not eligible" children and parents.

"We again find ourselves saying, 'There is no plan,'" said Anne Chandler, executive director of the Tahrih Justice Center in Houston. "They need a legal remedy – What is the response and what is an appropriate solution? We have no clarity."

Gelernt said the ACLU has already asked the government to provide more information about parents and will continue to do so. For parents determined to have

criminal backgrounds, the ACLU is asking for details so it can independently verify the government's claims.

Children with sponsors in the U.S. – a sibling over 18, grandparents, aunts or uncles – could be fast-tracked through asylum or special status hearings. It's unclear how many of those there are. Those who don't will likely have to start from scratch to apply for special immigrant juvenile status or asylum.

It's unclear if Sabraw will require the U.S. to reunify children with parents who have been deported. Gelernt said the ACLU intends to work with non-governmental organizations in Latin America to locate them. He also said he believed Sabraw has the authority to bring back parents who were removed, but that he thought it would be handled on a case by case basis and the judge couldn't issue a blanket order for everyone. Deported Parents

One such NGO, Kids In Need of Defense, started an initiative to reconnect parents and children, as well as to help families who have been reunified and deported. It will both try to assist parents who are seeking help and to actively find the parents of children who remain in U.S. custody.

"It's going to take a lot," said Lisa Frydman, KIND's vice president of regional policy and initiatives.

Other NGOs are working on similar efforts. The Women's Refugee Commission and the Vera Institute of Justice are operating databases of information about parents and children, while others are deployed on the ground in Central America.

It's also possible the Trump administration could take on a more active role in reunifying deported parents with their children, working in concert with Central American governments and groups like the International Red Cross and International Rescue Committee.

"The U.S. government could step forward to take responsibility and work with groups with tracing experience," Frydman said. "What's happened in the void is that NGOs have stepped forward."

The legal options for children who aren't reunified with their parents aren't entirely dismal and they may have more hope for asylum alone than they did with their parents, said Geoffrey Hoffman, a professor at University of Houston Law Center.

"The kids have their own case process to pursue and they may very well have a good case for special immigrant juvenile status," he said. "The question is that if they won't be reunified, how will they articulate what they want as the basis for their claims?"

711 Kids In Custody Haven't Been Reunited With Their Parents. What Happens To Them Now?

By Catherine E. Shoichet

[CNN](#), July 28, 2018

(CNN)We haven't seen their faces. We don't know their names. We only know a number: 711.

That's how many immigrant kids from separated families remain in custody, according to the latest government tally.

Officials say that, for various reasons, their families weren't eligible for reunification by Thursday's deadline. They might be in the future, although a former head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement warned this week that some of the children might never see their parents again.

What happens to these kids could vary greatly depending on each individual case. Attorneys are still battling over the next steps in court.

And as the landscape shifts, lawyers for immigration advocacy groups are trying to figure things out as they go.

Hundreds of separated children not reunited by court-ordered deadline

"It's just layers and layers of legal complexities that have been created," said Wendy Young, president of Kids in Need of Defense, a nonprofit dedicated to providing legal representation for unaccompanied minors.

One point of confusion: Although these children crossed the border with their parents, they're now considered "unaccompanied alien children" in the government's eyes – the same as if they'd come to the United States alone.

"There are some really thorny legal questions that arise," Young said, since these children became so-called unaccompanied minors only after officials separated them from their parents.

Here are some of the possible outcomes we can expect to see, based on how the government has handled the cases of unaccompanied minors in the past, and what we know about this group of children:

Remaining in government custody

In the short term, these kids are in the custody of the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which has been charged with the care and placement of unaccompanied alien children since 2003.

A look inside the places where infant and child migrants are held

The division operates more than 100 shelters across the country that house thousands of children until they can be released to sponsors while their immigration cases continue.

Many of the shelters are run by contractors, such as the massive facility inside a former Walmart in Texas that reporters toured last month.

The average length of stay in ORR custody is 57 days, officials said in June. But there's no limit on how long a kid can be held at an ORR facility, Young said.

Being released to other family members or designated sponsors

About 90% of unaccompanied kids in ORR custody are released to sponsors, Young said. Sponsors usually end up being family members, she said, and more than half the time they've been parents.

It's hard to know what the breakdown will be for the 711 kids who remain in custody. But officials have said some children from separated families were already released to sponsors.

According to the agency's website, sponsors:

- Are adults who are suitable to provide for the child's physical and mental well-being
- Have not engaged in any activity that would indicate a potential risk to the child
- Must pass a background check
- Must agree to ensure the child's presence at all future immigration proceedings
- Must agree to ensure the minor reports to ICE for removal from the United States if an immigration judge issues a removal order or voluntary departure order

Entering the foster care system

What happens if a sponsor can't be found to care for a child?

'Are my parents OK? Where are they?' Immigrant kids' first questions when they arrive in a New York facility

"The normal rule is that with these unaccompanied kids, if they don't have a relative that they can be released to, if they didn't arrive with a parent, then they are placed into federal foster care," Young said.

Could they then end up being adopted?

Historically, that's been very rare, according to Young.

"I've been working on this issue for 30 years. I can only think of maybe half a dozen cases where one of the unaccompanied kids has actually been put up for adoption," she said. "That's usually done when there's evidence that the parents are dead, and there's no other family member who can attain guardianship."

Getting removed from the United States

Even once they're released to sponsors, unaccompanied minors don't have legal immigration status. They're in removal proceedings, and if they don't succeed in making their cases to stay in the United States, they could be deported.

They have one-way tickets, paid for by Washington

The same thing could happen to the kids from separated families who remain in custody. Children from this group currently have immigration cases separate from their parents.

They'll have to make their immigration case alone, and there's no guarantee they'll have a lawyer to help. If a child can't prove his or her case in court, the case could end with a deportation order.

Reuniting with their parents

Officials say some of the 711 children still in custody weren't reunited because the parents declined reunification.

More than 400 haven't been reunited because their parents were likely deported and officials don't know the parents' whereabouts.

In other cases, families weren't reunited because red flags such as criminal convictions came up in the parents' backgrounds.

The government maintains it acted properly to protect children's safety and follow a judge's order.

The ACLU and other immigrant advocacy groups are pushing for the government to provide more details about each case. They argue that parents may have been coerced into signing paperwork they didn't understand – an accusation the government flatly denies.

Advocates say they're particularly concerned about parents who weren't allowed to reunite with their children due to purported criminal records.

"The government should be held accountable for the mess it's made and offer detailed rationales for why they deemed this parent inappropriate to release to," Young said. "I do not trust this government to make that decision correctly."

The next family separation crisis: Finding hundreds of deported parents

Once more is known about individual cases, it's likely that advocates will keep pushing for as many children as possible to be reunited with their parents – whether they are still in US custody or have been released or deported.

For kids of deported parents, there are two ways that could happen, advocates say:

- Kids whose parents were already deported could end up signing voluntary departure orders to rejoin their families, if their parents are located and tell officials they want to be reunited.

- Parents who were deported could be brought back to the United States to reunite with their children.

John Sandweg, who was acting director of ICE from 2013-2014, told CNN this week that he didn't think that was likely.

"There's a very good chance they're going to be permanently separated," Sandweg said.

But ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said advocacy organizations are doing what they can to push for more details and bring families back together.

"We want all the information from the government that they can provide," he told reporters Friday, "so we can help find those parents."

Civil Rights Group Describes 'Chaotic' Scramble To Reunite Separated Migrant Families In Texas

By Rafael Carranza

[Arizona Republic](#), July 27, 2018

The federal government's effort to reunite migrant parents with their children who were separated after reaching the U.S.-Mexico border has been chaotic and confusing, a legal group said Friday.

The Texas Civil Rights Project said the piecemeal process has led to at least one instance of the government presenting the wrong child to a mother and many more of parents left waiting and sleeping in cars overnight because their child had not arrived yet.

The federal government has been reuniting families under pressure from a federal judge in San Diego, who gave them until Thursday to reunite 2,551 minors ages 5 to 17. The Texas group told reporters on Friday that it represents 382 of the parents held in detention in the Rio Grande Valley.

As of Thursday, the court-imposed deadline, the federal government disclosed it had reunited 1,442 children. Another 771 remained in government custody because their parents were deemed ineligible for reunification, officials said.

Efren Olivares, the Texas Civil Rights Project's director for racial and economic justice, said the group had 110 of its clients reunited in the past two weeks.

He described the process as "chaotic" and said many of those rushed reunions took place in the parking lots of the detention facilities, and then the reunited families were dropped off to U.S. Catholic Charities or placed into family detention.

"One mother who was going to be reunited with her daughter, but ICE agents brought her the wrong child," Olivares said. "The issue was resolved later that day. But that goes on to show the problems with the lack of organization that will go to this extent of reuniting a mother with a wrong daughter."

A representative for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, one of two federal agencies tasked with reuniting the families, said it has no evidence that the mix-up ever happened.

But Olivares said a number of other issues have come up during the process.

A number of parents who have been cleared for release from the Port Isabel Detention Center in south Texas, he said, but remain in government custody and are unable to leave. ICE designated that detention center as a primary point for family reunifications.

The Texas Civil Rights Project also said it has received reports of parents who were released, but then had to wait long periods for their children to arrive at their location, where they were essentially stranded because they had no place to stay.

"They couldn't go back into the cells or the sleeping quarters, and they had to sleep in a car at the parking lot while they waited for their child to arrive," Olivares said.

In a statement, ICE said it tackled logistical challenges to reunite a large number of parents with their children by Thursday's court-ordered deadline.

But the agency acknowledged that processing delays last week resulted in some of those minors spending the night at Port Isabel, a detention center for adults, on July 15. ICE insisted those delays have been fixed and those children have since been reunited with their parents.

"Absent extenuating circumstances, on average, most children brought to (Port Isabel Detention Center) for transfer to DHS custody by HHS (Health and Human Services) are reunified with their parents within three hours of their arrival," the statement read.

Of the 771 parents deemed ineligible for reunification, including 431 with parents who may have already been deported, 120 with parents who waived reunification and 21 with parents who have criminal backgrounds.

Olivares said her group represents 65 parents who are still in adult detention but have not been reunited with their children, and seven parents who have been deported to their home countries. Four of the deported parents are in Guatemala; the remaining three are in Honduras.

"What they have told us so far is that they want their child," Olivares said. "They did not want to be deported without their child."

At Friday's federal court hearing, U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw commended the administration for reunifying families in immigration custody and faulted for hundreds of still-separated families outside of government custody.

Sabraw said the government gets "great credit" for reunifying more than 1,800 children with parents and sponsors. But he says attention must now turn to families who couldn't be reunited because their parents were deported – 431 at latest count.

He did not rule on the ACLU request for a one-week waiting period for reunified parents to decide if they want to seek asylum, keeping a temporary halt to deportations in place.

Meanwhile, the Senate Judiciary Committee said Friday that the panel would hold a hearing on family separations on Tuesday.

Witnesses set to testify at the hearing include top officials from Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Members of both parties criticized the Trump administration's policy on separating children from their parents at the border.

Earlier this week, 31 U.S. Senate Democrats dashed off a letter to the Inspector General's office within the Justice Department demanding an investigation into "DOJ's role in the creation and implementation of the Trump Administration's 'zero-tolerance' immigration policy."

"The Administration's implementation of this policy, the resulting separation of thousands of families, and the failure

to promptly reunite these families have been anything but orderly and lawful,” wrote the lawmakers.

The Inspector General in the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Department of Health and Human Services are already probing their respective agencies’ role on the zero-tolerance policy.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Dem Senator: Court Should Hold Trump Administration Accountable On Border Crisis

By Tess Bonn

[The Hill](#), July 27, 2018

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) on Friday said that federal authorities ultimately have the power to hold the Trump administration accountable when it comes to reuniting more than 2,500 migrant children with their parents after they were separated at the U.S. southern border.

“The authority of a judge is to hold them contempt of court,” Cortez Masto told Hill.TV’s Jamal Simmons in response to a question on what would happen if the Trump administration didn’t meet a court-ordered deadline for reunification.

“But the biggest hammer that this judge has right now is the jurisdiction over this administration — to constantly pull them into court, question what they are doing, get the documents from them and make sure that these families are being reunited,” Cortez Masto continued.

“We can continue to work for those 463 parents that have been deported already,” the former district attorney added. “That’s something for the judge to also question.”

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw initially set the July 26 deadline, which called for the government to reunite all children ages 5 to 17 with their families.

On Tuesday, Sabraw called Trump progress ahead of the deadline for reunifying families separated at the border a “remarkable achievement,” but he also said that he found that the effects of Trump’s policy that led to the separations “deeply troubling.”

Trump’s “zero-tolerance” policy is what lead to the separation of migrant families at the southern border.

The administration on Thursday identified 1,634 parents eligible for reunification with their children, out of a possible 2,551 children ages 5 and up in custody.

But another 463 parents may have already been deported, according to a government report. The administration said this exact number is still “under review.”

Dem Senator Wants ICE Funding Redistributed From ‘Deportation Force’

By Tess Bonn

[The Hill](#), July 27, 2018

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) said on Friday that she wants to slash funding for a division of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that she called “unnecessary” and “inhumane.”

“Let’s stop taking the money away from where it’s needed and stop giving it to this unnecessary deportation force,” Cortez Masto told Hill.TV correspondent Jamal Simmons.

“What I’ve seen this administration do is take the money from that important function that is important for our national security and take that fund and give it to an inhumane, unnecessary deportation force that is going after separating families,” Cortez Masto said, adding that there are “rogue agents” within ICE that are “abusing their power.”

“They should be held accountable,” she said.

The Nevada Democrat said she wants to use ICE funds to immediately reunite families separated after illegally crossing into the U.S. via the border with Mexico.

Last week, Cortez Masto introduced a bill alongside Democratic Sens. Kamala Harris (Calif.) and Jeff Merkley (Ore.) that would expedite family reunification and establish a “permanent system of coordination” to ensure the protection of detained immigrants with children. The measure also would redirect \$50 million in appropriations from ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations to fund provisions in the legislation.

In her interview with Hill.TV, Cortez Masto discussed the bill, saying she wants to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security continues to have the funding it needs to conduct important investigations.

— Tess Bonn

‘Why Did You Leave Me?’ The Migrant Children Left Behind As Parents Are Deported

By Miriam Jordan

[New York Times](#), July 27, 2018

Adayanci Perez Chavez, who was separated from her father when they crossed the border from Guatemala more than two months ago, has watched as one playmate after another has checked out of the migrant children’s center in Michigan where they have spent their days studying, playing and meeting with their case managers.

One by one over the past few weeks, 90 percent of the children at the center, managed by Bethany Christian Services in Kalamazoo, have been put on planes and reunited with parents who had been held at immigration detention centers across the country.

“Yanci” was not among them, because there was no longer a parent with whom to reunite her. Desperate to get his daughter back, her father, Hugo Lionel Perez, said he had agreed to accept quick deportation as the price — except that

when it came time to leave the country, he was put on a plane without her.

"The official told me, 'Sign here, and you will be deported together.' They tricked me," Mr. Perez, 30, said in a phone interview from his indigenous village in Guatemala. Now, he said, "Whenever we talk, Yanci asks me, 'Why did you leave me, Papito?'"

As the Trump administration has rushed to reunite thousands of children separated from their parents under a "zero-tolerance" policy on border enforcement, it is now left with 700 or more cases that have been more difficult to solve, including those of 431 parents who were apparently sent home without their children.

These are the cases that will continue to occupy federal immigration lawyers and immigrant advocates in the coming days, as federal authorities continue to unwind the effects of the policy that saw 2,800 or more children removed from their families in an attempt to deter the recent flood of migrant families from Central America.

Despite having substantially met the court's deadline for reuniting "eligible" parents and children, the Trump administration continues to face immigration lawsuits across the country, including a case in Seattle in which 17 states are challenging not only family separations, but how the government handles claims for asylum and the licensing requirements for migrant children held in detention.

In Los Angeles on Friday, Judge Dolly M. Gee of the Federal District Court said she would appoint an independent monitor to evaluate conditions for migrant children housed in border processing centers and family detention centers where families can be held for up to 20 days. The judge said there was a "disconnect" in the assessments of conditions at the facilities between government monitors and the harrowing accounts of lawyers, health workers and others who have cited inadequate water, inedible food and other problems.

"I think the court was moved," said Peter Schey, president of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, who was a co-lead counsel in a 1985 lawsuit over the detention of migrant children, on which the current challenge is based. "I think this was an essential step in bringing the government into line with the terms of the 1997 Flores settlement that required the humane treatment of detained children and their proper release in appropriate cases," he added.

Judge Gee also issued a second ruling, which was preliminary and therefore subject to change, in favor of plaintiffs who alleged that migrant children in federal custody are routinely medicated with powerful psychotropic drugs, without giving informed consent.

Leecia Welch, a lawyer with the National Center for Youth Law, which filed the second motion, said that evidence suggests that children were being medicated for "the convenience of the employees at the facilities to have more

zombified residents rather than to actually help these children with their mental health needs."

In the main case on family reunifications, Judge Dana M. Sabraw of the Federal District Court in San Diego signaled that he would likely rule over the weekend on a petition by the American Civil Liberties Union to further postpone immediate deportation of newly reunited families. Deportation orders are already pending against about 900 such families.

In about 120 cases, said Lee Gelernt, a lawyer with the A.C.L.U., parents signed papers agreeing to be deported themselves without understanding that they were giving up the right to take their child with them. In such cases, most children are permitted to pursue their own petitions for asylum in the United States.

"We absolutely want the judge to stay the removal of this group so we can talk to this group about whether they knowingly gave their children away," Mr. Gelernt said. "What we have found out is that many, many parents were clueless about what they were doing. They want their child."

Mr. Perez said this is what had happened to him.

He said he and his daughter had been apprehended by Border Patrol officers in Arizona on May 12 and separated the next day. After that, discussions began about accepting what is known as "expedited removal" back to Guatemala.

Lawyers at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, which is representing Yanci, said that they had received assurances from officials at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is responsible for children in government custody, that father and child would be reunited and sent home together if the organization did not pursue a separate immigration court case on behalf of the child.

"An offer was being made and we agreed to it so that the reunification could happen as quickly as possible. But the promise was not kept," said Susan Reed, managing attorney of the legal-aid organization in Kalamazoo, adding that the same scenario occurred in about five cases.

"We were comfortable with a plan that got us the best possible result without the child going through a lengthy court process," she said.

Since the father's departure in June, the organization has made three formal requests to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to expedite Yanci's removal from the country. Late Friday, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agreed that it would work with Yanci's lawyers to seek voluntary departure before an immigration judge. The process could take several more weeks before she can be returned.

Homeland Security officials have said that all the parents who were deported without their children made an informed decision to do so, and had agreed in writing to leave their offspring in the United States.

In a court filing this week, the A.C.L.U. said that "evidence is overwhelming that parents have signed forms

they did not understand,” including papers they thought stated that they wished to be reunified with their children.

Some Central American migrants are illiterate. And many migrants from the highlands of Guatemala, where several dialects are spoken, do not speak Spanish.

The A.C.L.U. cited several examples of detained parents who were confronted with documents to sign without understanding their content, and who sometimes did so under emotional duress. Among them were parents who had waived reunification when, in fact, they had wanted their children back, the organization said.

“They gave me a paper to sign in English, which I didn’t understand, because I believed their word,” Mr. Perez said. “There were others there who also signed thinking that they would get their kids back. We were about 10 together. They told us not to worry.”

The 1,878 children who were returned to parents or sponsors in recent weeks represent only a fraction of all those who were separated from their children after crossing the border, a practice that began last summer and escalated in May. President Trump issued an executive order on June 20 halting the separations after bipartisan outcry and global condemnation.

Of the 711 children who were deemed ineligible to reunify, according to government court filings, 431 have a parent outside the United States; 120 have parents who waived the right to reunification; 79 have a parent released into the country who has not been found; 94 have a parent whose location is under “review,” 67 have a parent who raised a “red flag” and seven have been precluded from reunification by separate litigation.

Immigrant lawyers working at family detention facilities and volunteers helping arrange shelter and travel for newly released families said Friday that reunifications had been plagued with chaos in some areas.

“The government would like the public to believe it successfully met the July 26 deadline; nothing could be further from the truth,” said Efrén C. Olivares, a director of the Texas Civil Rights Project. “Here in South Texas, chaos dominates the government’s family reunification efforts.”

He said that many parents were reunited with their children in a parking lot of the Port Isabel Detention Center. One mother was brought the wrong child. Some parents had to sleep in cars because they were released but their children were not yet there.

Mr. Perez makes his living in Guatemala working in the corn fields and doing odd jobs. He lives with his wife and two children in a room in his mother-in-law’s house.

His plan had been to head to Florida, where there is a large Guatemalan Mayan community, to work in landscaping until he had saved enough money to buy his family a home in their village.

“I went out of necessity. We don’t have a house. I wanted to work so that I can support and feed my family, whom I live for,” he said. “They took my daughter from me.”

In Kalamazoo, Yanci spends her days at the migrant children’s center and her nights with a foster family. But she has exhibited increased anxiety as many of the children who, like her, had been separated from their parents began leaving.

“She told me all her friends have gone with their mommies and daddies and keeps asking why she can’t leave too,” her mother, Alma Lucerito Chavez, said in a phone interview.

The child’s caseworker informed her last week that Yanci had taken scissors to her hair in a fit of anger.

“I talked to her today. She was crying, saying she doesn’t want to be there,” Ms. Chavez said.

Her husband said that he had asked about his daughter right up to the moment he was boarding the bus to the deportation plane. Immigration agents told him they had no idea, he said.

“I wouldn’t have signed anything had I known,” he said. “It was all a lie to get us out of there.”

Caitlin Dickerson contributed reporting.

DHS NEWS

Trump Convenes Election Security Meeting As Hacking Looms

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Chairs Election Security Meeting But Gives No New Orders To Repel Russian Interference

By Ellen Nakashima

[Washington Post](#), July 27, 2018

President Trump chaired a meeting Friday of his most senior national security advisers to discuss the administration’s effort to safeguard November’s elections from Russian interference, the first such meeting he’s led on the matter, but issued no new directives to counter or deter the threat.

The meeting, which lasted less than an hour, covered all the activities by federal agencies to help state and local election officials, and to investigate and hold accountable Russian hackers seeking to undermine American democracy.

“The president has made it clear that his administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors,” the White House said in a statement.

Trump's National Security Council meeting follows his widely criticized news conference this month in Helsinki, where he stood next to Russian President Vladimir Putin and seemed to discount the U.S. intelligence community's assessment that Moscow interfered in the 2016 U.S. election. Trump's remarks were striking, too, since only three days earlier 12 Russian intelligence officers were indicted by the United States on charges of hacking the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign.

It was a good meeting," said one senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe an event that was closed to media coverage. "Everybody was on the same page. We're doing a lot of good work across the administration."

There was no discussion of new actions Trump wants or of a coordinated strategy to prevent Russia from interfering in U.S. politics, officials said. Instead, the meeting focused on the activities undertaken so far.

House Democrats issued a statement criticizing Trump for not prioritizing election security sooner.

"This meeting should have happened months ago and the President deserves no special credit for doing what he is charged to do . . . by his oath of office," said Reps. Bennie Thompson (Miss.), Robert A. Brady (Pa.), Elijah E. Cummings (Md.) and Jerrold Nadler (N.Y.), the ranking Democrats on, respectively, the Homeland Security, House Administration, Oversight and Government Reform, and Judiciary committees.

The lawmakers called on the White House to produce a "solid plan of action."

In the absence of direct guidance from the White House, individual federal agencies have marshaled efforts to detect and counter the threat. The head of the National Security Agency created a Russia "small group" composed of NSA and military cyber-specialists tasked with detecting and countering Russian efforts to target the elections. If directed, U.S. Cyber Command, using NSA intelligence, can carry out offensive operations to disrupt such activity.

Already, at least three congressional candidates have been targeted by Russian military hackers. None of the attempts was successful, according to an executive with Microsoft, who discussed the operation at a security conference last week. One of the targets was Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), who faces a tough reelection bid.

"The Russians, as we know, are bad actors," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Friday during a news conference in Louisville. "They messed around in the last election. I've made it clear they better not mess around in another one. And we're on the watch for any efforts they may make to interfere in the 2018 elections."

FBI Director Christopher A. Wray last fall set up a foreign influence task force to counter influence operations targeting the United States. Such operations, the FBI said in

a statement Friday, include covert efforts "to influence U.S. policy, distort public sentiment and public discourse, and undermine confidence in democratic values to achieve other governments' geopolitical objectives."

The FBI task force works closely with the Department of Homeland Security and foreign allies who are also combating Russia's malign activities.

The Justice Department last week announced a new policy of exposing covert actions by foreign governments to undermine confidence in democratic institutions such as U.S. elections, often through cyberhacking and disinformation campaigns.

The most visible effort is being undertaken by the Department of Homeland Security, which is focused on election system security and has formed a task force made up of representatives from DHS and other federal agencies to share information and assist state and local election officials in bolstering the security of their systems.

Congress this year set aside \$380 million to help states strengthen their election infrastructure. But that is widely seen as insufficient. The Senate is weighing approval of an additional \$250 million in grants.

The DHS has carried out "very constructive" work with state and local election officials, said David Becker, a former Justice Department official who now heads the nonpartisan Center for Election Innovation & Research. "They're doing everything they can to give state and local election officials the tools to combat that threat."

But, he said, that's not enough.

"It's difficult for them to see our president standing next to the man who ordered that attack [against U.S. democracy] and not hold the Russians accountable," he said. "Yes, they need to detect and prevent attacks and mitigate any negative impacts, but it's also important to deter attacks in the first place. That's where we're missing leadership from the White House."

Suzanne Spaulding, a former senior Homeland Security official, said, "It's great that they're having an NSC meeting today, but it's like the pop-up summits with Putin and [North Korean leader] Kim Jong Un, without all the prep work being done to prepare options and tee up issues for more senior consideration."

Spaulding, who was undersecretary for the National Protection and Programs Directorate in the Obama administration, lauded the agencies for doing what they can on their own but said a White House-led strategy is important to maximize their efforts.

"You want to make sure that as you're preparing a plan for countering Russian interference that you bring to bear all the resources, capabilities and authorities you have across the government," Spaulding said. "You don't get that if each department and agency is just trying to operate within their own little sphere."

Seung Min Kim and Anne Gearan contributed to this report.

Trump Huddles With Top Officials On Election Security

By Morgan Chalfant

[The Hill](#), July 27, 2018

President Trump on Friday met with members of the National Security Council about threats to U.S. elections, an issue that has attracted significant attention since Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election.

Trump convened the meeting to “receive updates on the whole-of-government approach his Administration is implementing to safeguard our Nation’s elections,” according to a statement from the White House issued Friday evening.

A host of Cabinet officials attended the meeting, including Vice President Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, FBI Director Christopher Wray, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and John Bolton, Trump’s national security adviser.

“The President has made it clear that his Administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors,” the White House said.

The meeting comes as Trump continues to weather scrutiny for his summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki last week, during which he cast doubt on the U.S. intelligence community’s judgment that Moscow interfered in the 2016 election — a statement he later tried to clarify by saying he misspoke.

Since then, Trump has speculated on Twitter that Russia might look to meddle in the 2018 midterms to help Democratic candidates.

“I’m very concerned that Russia will be fighting very hard to have an impact on the upcoming Election. Based on the fact that no President has been tougher on Russia than me, they will be pushing very hard for the Democrats,” the president tweeted Tuesday. “They definitely don’t want Trump!”

Trump administration officials have insisted they are taking steps to protect future elections from foreign cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns.

The Department of Homeland Security has been taking the lead on helping states to protect their voting systems from malicious actors. Officials say that Russian hackers probed digital election systems in 21 states before the 2016 election for vulnerabilities and in a small number of cases successfully breached them.

Other agencies, like the Department of Justice, have implemented measures to protect against foreign influence.

Still, Democrats in Congress believe the administration is not doing enough to protect against the threat, often citing

the president’s muddled statements about Russian interference in the 2016 election.

“If the President wants to convince the public that he takes protecting this country seriously, we need a solid plan of action to come from this meeting,” a group of House Democrats said in a statement ahead of Friday’s meeting. “The public needs to know that this is not just another spectacle for the President to put on.”

At Friday’s meeting, the officials discussed threats to U.S. elections from “malign foreign actors,” as well as efforts to help states secure their voting systems from cyber sabotage and federal efforts to “investigate, prosecute, and hold accountable those who illegally attempt to interfere in our political and electoral processes.” The statement made no specific mention of Russia.

Trump has held at least one other meeting on election security with Cabinet officials in May.

U.S. officials say they have observed continued efforts by Russia to use social media and other avenues to sow discord among the American public, not unlike Moscow’s disinformation efforts in 2016. However, officials say they have not seen any evidence of a broad hacking and propaganda scheme targeting the 2018 midterms.

“We haven’t seen yet an effort to target specific election infrastructure this time, but certainly other efforts — which I would call malign influence efforts — are very active and we could be just a moment away from it going to the next level,” Wray said at the Aspen Security Forum last week.

“To me, it’s a threat that we need to take extremely seriously,” Wray said.

Still, the Daily Beast first reported Thursday that Russian hackers tried to infiltrate the emails of Sen. Claire McCaskill’s (D-Mo.) staffers as she began her 2018 reelection campaign. McCaskill appeared to confirm the report in a later statement, though she described the attack as “not successful.”

Trump Holds Election-security Meeting Ahead Of Midterms

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 27, 2018

President Trump received an update from his National Security Council Friday afternoon on the government-wide effort to prevent foreign interference in the U.S. election system.

The meeting in the secure White House situation room “addressed threats posed to our elections from malign foreign actors, efforts underway to provide cybersecurity assistance to state and local authorities, and actions to investigate, prosecute, and hold accountable those who illegally attempt to interfere in our political and electoral processes,” the White House said.

The statement did not mention Russia, which U.S. intelligence officials have accused of ongoing efforts to undermine American democracy.

"The president has made it clear that his Administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors," said White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Among those in the meeting were Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary James Mattis, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, CIA Director Gina Haspel, national security advisor John R. Bolton, and FBI Director Christopher Wray.

U.S. Moves To Defend Elections, Thwart Influence Campaigns: Mattis

By Phil Stewart

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Despite Trump's Assurances, States Struggling To Protect 2020 Election

The president pledges to help states secure their election systems, but most won't have updated equipment in place before 2020.

By Eric Geller

[Politico](#), July 27, 2018

President Donald Trump on Friday promised an intense, "whole-of-government" focus on securing the nation's elections from cyberattacks — but a POLITICO survey of states finds ample reasons to worry about both this year's midterms and 2020.

Only 14 states plus Washington, D.C., say they plan to replace their voting machines in time for the next presidential election using their shares of the \$380 million in election technology funding that Congress approved in March, according to POLITICO's survey of election agencies nationwide.

At least six other states have paid for new voting equipment with other money. But 22 states either have decided not to upgrade their machines or are unsure of their plans — with some saying they would need much more federal aid to swap out their equipment.

POLITICO has previously reported that states expected to have few security upgrades in place before November, when voters will decide whether to keep Trump's Republican allies in charge of Congress. Of the 42 states that described aspects of their plans to POLITICO, none indicated they

would have new voting machines purchased with federal funding in place this year.

The findings alarmed election security experts, even as Trump chaired a National Security Council meeting Friday to review his administration's efforts to fend off the expected return of the Russian hackers who meddled in 2016. That meeting covered cyber threats to elections from "malign foreign actors," federal assistance to states and "actions to investigate, prosecute, and hold accountable" election meddlers, according to the White House.

"The President has made it clear that his Administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors," Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement. "The Trump Administration will continue to provide the support necessary to the owners of elections systems — State and local governments — to secure their elections."

But security experts have long warned that voting machines represent an often-overlooked vulnerability for American democracy, especially the paperless touchscreen devices that 30 states rely on either totally or partially. Those experts said the \$380 million that Congress provided this year is barely enough to train election workers and fix the voter registration databases that were a top target for hackers in 2016 — and nowhere near enough to replace insecure voting machines.

"Congress urgently needs to work with the states and figure out how to get this dilapidated technology out of polling places before 2020," said J. Alex Halderman, a computer science professor and voting security expert at the University of Michigan.

State election officials say they can do only so much with the money they have. And in many states, the decisions about buying voting equipment rest with county election supervisors trying to stretch meager budgets.

"North Carolina does not believe spreading this money thinly over 100 counties to help them purchase new voting equipment would be an effective use of these one-time dollars," Patrick Gannon, spokesman for the state's board of elections, told POLITICO in a statement. North Carolina still relies partly on paperless voting machines, although a state law will require all counties to use either paper ballots or machines that produce paper records after 2019.

In Texas, replacing electronic voting machines in the state's three largest counties could cost up to \$50 million, more than twice the money Congress provided, said Sam Taylor, a spokesman for the Texas secretary of state's office.

But the state has been working on upgrades since 2016, he said. "Nearly 50 Texas counties have purchased new voting equipment, at least 11 of which have switched from [paperless machines] to systems that have some form of a paper trail," Taylor said.

Texas has 254 counties, however.

Other states, like Missouri, will let localities decide how to use the federal money. "If they wish to replace voting machines with the funds provided, they may do that, but the funding provided is not sufficient to do that on a large scale," Maura Browning, a spokeswoman for Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, told POLITICO in a statement.

Meanwhile, the House voted this month to slash federal election aid to the states in their budget proposals for the 2019 fiscal year, after Republican leaders noted that states haven't yet used up this year's \$380 million. And even some lawmakers sympathetic to the states' plight aren't offering many prospects for quick relief from Congress.

States have "always said they needed more than that initial tranche of money, so I'm hoping we can do more," said Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the top Democrat on the Senate Rules Committee. But she said her "major priority" is the Secure Elections Act, a bipartisan bill designed to improve coordination among federal and state agencies when it comes to sharing information about potential threats to election systems.

Klobuchar, the bill's chief Democratic co-sponsor, told POLITICO this week that the committee plans to mark up the measure when Congress returns from its August recess.

Investigators probing Russian interference in the 2016 election have never alleged that hackers altered any votes, instead pointing to a wide-ranging plot that included spreading fake news on social media and pilfering emails from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman. But special prosecutor Robert Mueller's latest indictment accused Russian hackers of infiltrating a Florida-based company that supplies software for voting machines across the country. And cybersecurity experts have demonstrated an ability to breach at least some versions of the machines, sometimes in minutes.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said he would at least like to see his own state — one of five that exclusively use paperless electronic voting machines — do more to provide for paper backups that could help detect tampering after the fact.

"I hope they would make sure they've got a redundant system, because we're gonna need one," Graham said.

The deadline for states and territories to submit details for commission funding was July 16. A spokeswoman for the federal Election Assistance Commission, which is administering the funds, said the plans would be posted online in mid-August.

New Jersey, Delaware, Georgia, South Carolina and Louisiana all rely on machines without paper backups, according to Verified Voting, a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes the use of secure election equipment. Of those states, all but New Jersey have indicated they plan to replace machines or add paper backups to improve security.

At least six states — California, Colorado, Maryland, Nevada, Texas and Virginia — told POLITICO they recently completed or are working on election equipment upgrades with other sources of money.

"I'd like to see more states replacing systems before 2020," said Lawrence Norden, deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice. "But if they don't have enough money" and must choose among upgrading registration systems, buying new voting machines and training personnel, "it may well be that spending on something other than new machines is the right call."

In Pennsylvania, where 49 of the 67 counties exclusively use paperless voting machines, the state election office said it would give its federal funds to the counties so they could buy new systems with paper backups. But counties don't have to select those new systems until the end of 2019, on the eve of presidential primary season. "Some of them might make those purchases this year," said spokeswoman Wanda Murren, "but we are not aware of any that have done so at this point."

Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos, the new president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, recently said both Congress and Trump need to do more. He urged Congress to create a regular election security grant program, and he said he hasn't seen much leadership on the issue from the president, who has denounced the Russia investigation as a "witch hunt."

"Unfortunately, the person at the top has not been supportive and has sent mixed messages, and that makes it difficult on us as secretaries," Condos said in a July 20 interview on C-SPAN.

Joseph Lorenzo Hall, a voting security researcher who is chief technologist at the Center for Democracy and Technology, backed the idea of offering regular grants for election security, telling POLITICO that states' spending decisions this year "might be very different if election officials knew they'd be getting at least this much each fiscal year."

Given the paucity of available funds, Hall said he was generally "satisfied" with how states were spending them. "It's time to shore up defenses," he said, "not procure whole new systems."

Not everyone agrees that it should be Congress' job to subsidize voting security improvements.

Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, the chief Republican co-sponsor of the Secure Elections Act, said he didn't "want to add additional funding until we know how the previous funding was spent" — which won't happen until the EAC releases an audit next year. "We don't know if they're spending it for security or for other issues at this point," Lankford told POLITICO.

Halderman, the voting security expert at the University of Michigan, said the inconsistent progress "demonstrates why we need consistent minimum security standards that

states can meet or beat.” Experts generally consider the existing voluntary guidelines to be insufficient, and even those standards only cover voting systems, not other election technology.

Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.), whose state exclusively uses paperless machines, said Congress should have “exerted some real oversight” over the election upgrade process to ensure more uniform security considerations across the country.

Halderman agreed that more leadership is needed.

Local election offices are “suddenly on the front lines of international conflict,” Halderman said. “We need to accelerate the pace of this progress and ensure that the slowest-moving states don’t leave gaping holes in our national election cybersecurity posture.”

Brianna Milord, Maria Curi, Lauren Aratani, Martin Matishak and Tim Starks contributed to this report.

Trump Admin Has No Central Strategy For Election Security, And No One’s In Charge

[NBC News](#), July 27, 2018

WASHINGTON — After nearly two years of calling Russian election interference a hoax and its investigation a witch hunt, on Friday afternoon President Donald Trump is scheduled to preside over the first National Security Council meeting devoted to defending American democracy from foreign manipulation.

Nineteen months into his presidency, there is no coherent Trump administration strategy to combat foreign election interference — and no single person or agency in charge, current and former officials tell NBC News.

After terrorists struck on 9/11, the U.S. government passed laws, boosted funding, and reorganized itself with the goal of making sure such an attack could never happen again. But no such wholesale changes have taken place in the nearly two years since Russia sought to manipulate the 2016 election, cyber aggression that some lawmakers have called an act of war.

To be sure, individual government agencies have responded in various ways. The Department of Homeland Security is working with states to improve cyber security in voting systems. The FBI created a “foreign influence task force,” and the Justice Department announced a new policy this month to inform the public about bots and trolls on social media. The National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command are coordinating to counter Russian influence in cyberspace, the general in charge of those agencies has said.

But even members of Trump’s national security cabinet have acknowledged the need for a central, unifying effort — one that experts say is missing. Senior officials have also admitted that the government has failed to take steps

necessary to give the Russians second thoughts about intervening in American politics. Trump hasn’t done so, and neither did Barack Obama, whose response to election meddling — expelling diplomats and closing Russian compounds in December 2016 — has been described by some of his own former aides as tepid.

If any evidence was needed that the Russians haven’t been deterred, a Democratic senator, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, said Thursday she was the target of an unsuccessful Russian hacking attempt. A Microsoft official says that company has also observed attempted Russian hacks against two other unnamed candidates.

“I do think we need to do more as a government. It requires a whole of government, because it’s not just the elections,” Kirstjen Nielsen, the Homeland Security secretary, told NBC’s Peter Alexander at the Aspen Security Forum earlier this month.

Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence, said in a speech this month that “the system is blinking red” on Russia cyber threats but “we have to do better in what we deliver to our customers.”

In April, a top National Security Agency official said the U.S. doesn’t “yet have the political fortitude to say how we’ll strike back” against Russian misbehavior in cyberspace. No additional fortitude has been on display in the months since. NSA director Paul Nakasone, asked about those comments last week, said he wasn’t aware of them.

“We have to as a nation bring all of the elements of our power against our adversaries,” he said.

In February, his predecessor, Adm. Mike Rogers, told Congress the Russians “haven’t paid a price at least that’s sufficient to get them to change their behavior,” adding later that “we’re taking steps, but we’re probably not doing enough.”

Last week, House Republicans voted down a proposal by Democrats to increase election funding to states by \$380 million — the cost of about four F-35 fighter jets.

Democrats in Congress are deeply dismayed.

“In a normal White House, there would be a point person on the National Security Council, to coordinate all the different agencies and to work with the states and the social media companies to make sure our electoral systems aren’t so vulnerable to attack,” Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, who is helping lead an investigation into Russian interference as ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, told NBC News.

“But President Trump’s inability to acknowledge that the Russians interfered in 2016 and that they will be back in 2018 is really hampering the government’s response to this threat. We just don’t have a whole-of-government strategy for dealing with this problem, and it leaves us incredibly vulnerable to continued interference by the Russians or, for

that matter, any other adversary who might try to steal their playbook.”

Asked to comment, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council, who declined to allow her name to be used, said in an email: “The NSC leads the regular and continuous coordination of the whole of government approach to addressing foreign malign influence and election security.”

Asked who at the NSC was responsible, she did not respond. The White House eliminated the job of cyber security coordinator on the National Security Council.

“Unless the president is personally invested and mobilizing vocally and forcefully the executive branch, the government does not approach something like this with the power that is there,” said John McLaughlin, a former CIA director and MSNBC contributor.

Not only hasn’t Trump done that — he has repeatedly cast doubt on the very idea that Russia intervened in the election, a finding endorsed by every senior member of his national security team. On Sunday night, he tweeted that the idea is “a big hoax.” His press spokeswoman said he meant that to refer to the charges that his campaign colluded, but the tweet didn’t say that.

So President Obama knew about Russia before the Election. Why didn’t he do something about it? Why didn’t he tell our campaign? Because it is all a big hoax, that’s why, and he thought Crooked Hillary was going to win!!!

The Russian attack on the 2016 election — with the goal, ultimately, of hurting Hillary Clinton and helping Donald Trump — came in three waves. Two of them have been described in detail in indictments by Robert Mueller, the special counsel who is investigating whether the Trump campaign coordinated with the Russians.

The three attack vectors:

While U.S. intelligence officials have said they don’t see a Russian effort to go after voting systems timed to the midterms this fall, they acknowledge that there is little to stop the Russians from doing so. Meanwhile, the social media manipulation has never stopped, and the hacking attempts appear to continue.

Coats, the nation’s top intelligence official, spoke at length about his worries in a speech this month, given just days before Trump stood next to Vladimir Putin and seemed to undercut his intelligence agencies on Russian interference.

“Russia has been the most aggressive foreign actor — no question,” Coats said. “And they continue their efforts to undermine our democracy.”

As to the upcoming midterm elections, he said, it’s fairly meaningless that there are no signs of interference in specific states, because “we fully realize that we are just one click of the keyboard away from a similar situation repeating itself.”

Moreover, Coats added, “we are seeing aggressive attempts to manipulate social media and to spread propaganda focused on hot-button issues that are intended to

exacerbate socio-political divisions. Despite public statements by the Kremlin to the contrary, we continue to see individuals affiliated with the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency creating new social media accounts, masquerading as Americans, and then using these accounts to draw attention to divisive issues.”

He continued: “These actions are persistent, they are pervasive, and they are meant to undermine America’s democracy on a daily basis, regardless of whether it is election time or not. Russian actors and others are exploring vulnerabilities in our critical infrastructure as well.”

“The warning signs are there, the system is blinking, and that is why I believe we are at a critical point.”

Trump will get a chance to address these issues Friday. The NSC meeting comes exactly two years to the day after he exhorted the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton’s campaign while running for president.

“Russia, if you’re listening, I hope you’re able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing,” said candidate Trump during a news conference at his golf course in Doral, Florida on July 27, 2016.

Later that same day, Mueller’s indictment noted, Russian hackers did try to breach Clinton campaign networks.

Russia likely will be listening to Trump’s words Friday, as will many Americans.

Top US Officials Brief Trump On Election Security

By Anna Giaritelli

[Washington Examiner](#), July 27, 2018

President Trump met with the country’s top security officials Friday and was briefed by the National Security Council on government-wide efforts to thwart interference or attacks on the U.S. election process ahead of the November races, according to the White House.

The White House Office of the Press Secretary said Trump chaired the meeting and discussed “malign foreign actors, efforts underway to provide cybersecurity assistance to state and local authorities, and actions to investigate, prosecute, and hold accountable those who illegally attempt to interfere in our political and electoral processes.”

Secretaries from the State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security departments, as well as leaders of the CIA, Joint Chiefs of Staff, FBI, U.S. Cyber Command, and others attended the meeting.

“The president has made it clear that his administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors,” the Office of the Press Secretary said in a statement.

One attendee, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, was asked ahead of the briefing what the government is doing to

prevent Russia from interfering in this year's midterm elections.

"I'm not at liberty to explain what we're doing in that regard. Just, rest assured, there are actions underway to protect our — our elections or to expose any external — any — by anybody — external efforts to influence the American public, to show false news, that sort of thing," Mattis told reporters.

The sit-down comes four days before top government officials, including Vice President Mike Pence, DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, FBI Director Christopher Wray, and National Security Agency Director Gen. Paul Nakasone hold a summit in Manhattan to discuss election security efforts.

During a joint press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this month, Trump said he doubts Russia interfered in the 2016 election. Following criticism from some of the media and even Republican lawmakers, Trump changed tones and said he held Putin "responsible" for the interference.

2018 Midterms: President Trump Meets With Security Aides As Critics Demand Federal Election Plan

By Deborah Barfield Berry And David Jackson

[USA Today](#), July 27, 2018

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump pledged a "whole-of-government" effort Friday to prevent foreign interference in U.S. elections, as critics demanded a more thorough plan to thwart Russian cyberattacks on the November midterms.

"The President has made it clear that his Administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors," said a White House statement after Trump met with his National Security Council about election security.

Though the statement did not mention Moscow specifically, Trump administration officials say they worry the Russians will seek to disrupt November's voting. Some lawmakers said the administration is ignoring the threat of the kinds of interference the Russians employed in 2016 to benefit Trump.

"If the president's election security meeting only lasted a measly 30 minutes, cut short to fly off to Bedminster to golf, he's telling the American people that he refuses to take this issue seriously," said Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the top Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee.

With less than four months until the midterms, Thompson questioned the last-minute push.

"A lot of us are not convinced that all hands are on deck on this effort ... If so, people would be trying to put resources behind it," said Thompson, noting that earlier this year the

White House eliminated the post of cybersecurity coordinator. "If we are concerned about November, we had almost a year and a half head start to do something."

Russian election actions, including the hacking of Democratic Party officials and pushing fake news about 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, are the subjects of an investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller. His prosecutors are also looking at possible links between Russian hackers and the Trump campaign, though the president has denied collusion.

In its statement, the White House said it began election security planning at the start of the administration, and the effort "has been carried out to support State and local election officials in all 50 States, the Territories, and the District of Columbia."

Trump discussed the threats from "malign foreign actors," the statement said, but the readout did not cite Russia specifically. The administration said it "will continue to provide the support necessary to the owners of elections systems – State and local governments – to secure their elections."

Earlier this week, Trump himself said he is concerned that Russia will try to interfere in the November elections – in favor of Democrats.

Democrats scoffed at that notion, citing indictments alleging the Russians directed an election sabotage plan in 2016 designed to benefit Trump.

"We are skeptical that the president's newfound interest in election security is anything more than cheap talk and desperate damage control, especially as he continues to make ludicrous claims that up is down and black is white," a group of House Democrats, including Thompson, said in statement Friday.

As the federal government ponders a national plan, some states are taking action on their own.

State election officials have long raised concerns about the threat of cyberattacks taking their own steps to protect election data by encrypting their systems and asking the Department of Homeland Security to check their systems for vulnerabilities.

They also asked Congress to help fund their efforts.

Earlier this month, the Election Assistance Commission distributed \$348 million of \$380 million to states to help protect against cyberthreats to the midterms. Congress approved the funding earlier this year.

The commission quickly distributed the funds so states could better prepare. Many states plan to hire cybersecurity experts and update voter registration systems, while some want to buy new equipment.

"I think it will help," Tom Hicks, chairman of the commission, said of the funds. "They're using a ton of money for upgrading and hardening systems ... The next federal

election will be right around the corner. I think this is good timing for them.”

Rhode Island Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, co-chair of the National Association of Secretaries of State Elections Committee, said cybersecurity is a priority for its members.

Gorbea, who recently testified before Congress, said states will need ongoing funds from the federal government.

“We’re up against nation-states,” Gorbea told USA TODAY Tuesday. “This is not as simple as going out and buying voting machines. This is much more than that.”

“We just need to continue to raise this issue as an ongoing issue and not let it just die down after the midterms,” she said.

Thompson said Congress and the White House need to put more money behind talk to protect the nation’s election systems.

“They pushed a little money out the door a few weeks ago, but that’s just pittance to what we really need to fix the problem,” he said.

Lacking Direction From White House, Intelligence Agencies Scramble To Protect Midterm Elections From Hackers

By Jenna McLaughlin And Donie O’Sullivan
[CNN](#), July 27, 2018

(CNN)With the midterm election only a few months away, government officials working to counter election interference from Russia have been operating with no strategy from the top, including from President Donald Trump’s fractured National Security Council, leaving each agency to fend for itself without White House support or direction, according to lawmakers and national security officials who spoke with CNN.

On Friday, following bipartisan criticism about the White House’s focus on pressuring Russia on election interference, Trump is expected to convene a meeting of the NSC to discuss election interference efforts where high-ranking officials including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are expected to attend. Further details, including Trump’s planned remarks, weren’t available.

Defense of America’s electoral system has traditionally centered around the security of election infrastructure, like voting machines and voter rolls.

However, as indictments from special counsel Robert Mueller allege, Russian operatives also seek to exploit weaknesses in the cyber infrastructure of individual political campaigns, while weaponizing social media platforms to spread targeted disinformation.

Despite President Trump’s reassurance last Tuesday that, “We’re doing everything in our power to prevent Russian interference in 2018,” Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat

on the Senate Intelligence Committee, has said the White House isn’t taking the lead.

“I think it’s an embarrassment that this White House has not made election security a top priority and has not put the kind of attention and focus on it that we need,” Warner said on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

Guidance from the White House on an issue like this would normally come from the West Wing’s NSC. But intelligence and congressional sources tell CNN that isn’t happening.

US intelligence chief: ‘The warning lights are blinking red again’ on cyberattacks

“There’s no overall strategy, there is no one in charge. You have a lot of disconnected, discombobulated efforts that are quite frankly dysfunctional,” said Brett Bruen, the former White House director of global engagement in the Obama administration who had also criticized that administration for not taking the threat posed by disinformation seriously enough.

The Department of Homeland Security, which says it is the lead agency on electoral cybersecurity efforts, insists the agencies are “very interconnected” in their preparations for the 2018 midterms, though officials and overseers privately contradict that.

Turnover at the National Security Council, a lack of direction from the President and agency rivalries have kept different efforts at least partially walled off from each other.

Meanwhile, social media companies that have been roundly criticized for allowing Russian disinformation campaigns targeting Americans run rampant on their platforms in the lead up to the 2016 election are looking to the intelligence community for guidance for how to best prepare.

The 2018 threat

Speaking at the Aspen Security Forum last week, FBI Director Christopher Wray said that while the intelligence community has not yet observed an effort by Russia to target specific election infrastructure as they did in 2016, information operations “aimed at sowing discord and divisiveness in the country” were “very active.”

Multiple sources working in intelligence and national security tell CNN that there is no indication that Russia will assert itself with the same vigor as 2016. However, as Wray remarked on Wednesday, “we could just be a moment away from it going to the next level.”

The President’s comments, particularly those made in support of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, have routinely undermined their efforts, forcing some intelligence officials to draw ranks internally and debate whether or not it’s better to stay or go.

Even Trump’s own intelligence chief, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, has warned of the constant barrage of cyber-attacks on the US, including against its critical infrastructure. At the Hudson Institute in Washington,

DC, he recently compared the current state of danger to the months prior to the 9/11 attacks, when agencies did not communicate sufficiently to combine resources and attempt to prevent tragedy.

"I'm here to say, the warning lights are blinking red again," he said.

"DHS does not have evidence of the fact that anywhere near what happened in 2016," Coats later said at the Aspen Security Conference last Thursday. "However, despite that, we absolutely have to ... we cannot just rest on that assumption."

The threat posed to 2018 candidates was made clear on Thursday, when Missouri Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill confirmed a Daily Beast report that Russians had targeted her Senate computer network.

The White House has often been on the defensive when accused of being under prepared or failing to be aggressive against Russia – pointing to instances when it has acted against Russia in the past but failing to lay out a specific plan for the future.

"President Donald J. Trump and his Administration are defending the integrity of our election system," proclaimed the White House in a recent press release, though NSC and WH spokespeople would not provide specific answers on the all of government strategy to do just that in the midterms.

Who's doing what?

Since the US intelligence community announced in January 2017 that high-level Kremlin officials directed an aggressive and varied campaign to disrupt the 2016 presidential elections, agencies employing people with skills in cybersecurity, counterintelligence, technology and foreign influence have doubled down on efforts to prevent it from happening again.

The Department of Homeland Security is "in the lead" protecting election infrastructure, a spokesperson told CNN. However, it's unclear how actively states have sought guidance. While DHS says it has worked with every state, according to a White House fact sheet published earlier this month, only 18 states have requested on-site "risk and vulnerability assessments," and only 34 states receive ongoing cybersecurity scans from the federal government.

While DHS is in the lead and doing "some" work, one Democratic congressional source familiar with the matter said, "there are still a lot of holes," including a lack of openness with states about cyber vulnerabilities in the voter registration and polling infrastructure — 90% of which is supplied by three vendors.

West Virginia Secretary of State Mac Warner, who oversees elections in the state and is in his first term, told a meeting of local election officials on Monday that he pressured DHS to share more information with states about threats.

Matt Masterson, a senior DHS election security official, encouraged local officials at the event to sign up to a new DHS-funded service that shares threat information.

The FBI is leading the counterintelligence effort and stood up a foreign influence team earlier this year to monitor and counter election interference. The head of that unit departed recently to join the private sector, though the FBI told CNN its work "continues without interruption."

The State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) works to detect and counter disinformation campaigns outside the US. The State Department told CNN, "If the GEC detected a coordinated campaign directed at a US political candidate, it would pass that information off to the FBI and DHS that have the lead on countering that type of propaganda and disinformation."

The National Security Agency, the top digital intelligence agency, and US Cyber Command, which conducts cyber-attacks against foreign adversaries, last week joined together under the direction of their new leader Gen. Paul Nakasone to specifically counter Russian aggression prior to the election, according to The Washington Post.

The agencies recently built a brand-new center to host joint cyber operations between NSA and Cyber Command as well as foreign partners.

However, Nakasone's predecessor, Mike Rogers, told Congress that he had not been given instructions by the President on responding to Russian aggression. Cyber Command is currently authorized to act in a wide variety of circumstances, including in war zones and against ISIS militants, one source familiar with matter told CNN. For broader authorities, Trump may need to issue a presidential finding delineating which targets are approved — something that could happen in secret. However, according to the Democratic congressional source this administration has given more latitude to agencies to be more aggressive — and Nakasone could likely act against Russia in the absence of specific direction not to.

There have been some public successes in the ongoing effort.

In March, DHS and FBI worked together to release detailed information on the Russian government targeting the energy sector and other critical infrastructure since at least March 2016.

The administration has levied increased sanctions on Russian companies and individuals and expelled a large number of Russian officials from the United States. But based on the news conference between Trump and Putin in Helsinki, the Kremlin may still be hoping to extract major concessions from the President. It is still unknown if Trump made any promises to President Vladimir Putin behind closed doors, accompanied only by official translators.

A disconnect

But despite those efforts, thanks in part to a lack of coordination at the top and gaps in international norms in cyberspace, officials don't appear to always be working off a central, organized playbook.

Claire McCaskill says attempted Russia hacking on her office 'not successful'

At the National Security Council, John Bolton has eliminated the position of cybersecurity coordinator, pushing out or firing his top officials on cybersecurity, Tom Bossert and Rob Joyce. Former and current NSC officials expressed frustration at the lack of progress the agency has made on cybersecurity strategy, and other national security officials said the council is not coordinating and elevating the different agencies' strategies on countering Russian aggression.

Coats said last Thursday that Bolton is "putting in the replacements" for the absent cybersecurity coordinator, though it has been widely reported that he eliminated the job entirely.

Hoping to avoid a repeat of 2016, when its platform was exploited by a Russian government-linked group posing as American activists, Facebook hosted a meeting with top tech companies and US intelligence officials at its headquarters in California in May.

The New York Times, which was first to report the meeting, reported that "neither the FBI nor the Department of Homeland Security was willing or able to share specific information about threats the tech companies should anticipate."

But there appears to be signs of progress. Facebook told CNN last week that the company is working with the FBI and DHS, and said, "There is more to do but we are encouraged to see progress in other areas, such as the creation of the (FBI) Foreign Influence Task Force."

The tech companies are hoping intelligence agencies will share technical information that could help identify ongoing disinformation campaigns on their platforms but appear to appreciate that it isn't straightforward.

A Facebook spokesperson said the company understands the sharing of threat intelligence information is complicated for the government and that finding solutions will take time.

Hillary Clinton's former campaign manager Robby Mook, whose campaign was extensively targeted and hacked in 2016, said campaigns need help from the intelligence agencies.

"The intelligence community has access to human and signals intelligence campaigns don't," Mook said. "They can provide critical early warning and context. We must develop a framework for this collaboration to happen."

What If Trump Is Right? : NPR

By Philip Ewing

[NPR](#), July 29, 2018

What if, this time around, a wave of foreign interference is aimed at helping Democrats take control of Congress?

It's an idea that has been battled around a great deal since 2016. It is based on the thesis that Russian President Vladimir Putin doesn't actually care about either party. What he wants is chaos, strife, deadlock and a corrosion of faith in U.S. political institutions.

To that end, what better way to bring about another upheaval than by trying to whipsaw the political balance from Trump and Republicans to the putative return two years later of a House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her Democrats?

President Trump sounded that warning last week on Twitter.

What if he's right?

Russia's active measures against the U.S. and the West never stopped after 2016, as the intelligence bosses keep saying, and Russian efforts are expected to continue through the 2018 and 2020 elections.

If the warning lights are already "blinking red," as Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats put it, the next question is: To what end?

How might the Russians do it?

The Russians could use a version of the playbook they ran in 2016: Deploy human operatives to mix things up, attack state elections infrastructure, steal information in cyberattacks and then dump it for maximum political effect — all the while turning up the volume on political controversy by agitating on social media.

Or they could attempt some new permutation of this scheme, perhaps by mixing in new, high-tech fake audio or video. Or because they know how much Americans now know about the tools in this kit, there could be some other new strategy that no one is expecting.

Or there could be nothing.

With so much attention drawn by reporters and politicians to the election interference storyline, Putin might conclude a big push on election interference won't work unless it can benefit from the element of surprise.

So far, as Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has said, there has not been as big a push as in 2016. Still, some cyber mischief is underway: Microsoft says it has detected so-called spear-phishing attacks on at least three campaigns this year, though it didn't reveal which ones or how many total attacks it knows about.

One target who has identified herself does not suggest the Russians have switched sides: Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat, said cyberattackers had tried to get into her Senate office systems but failed.

"While this attack was not successful, it is outrageous that they think they can get away with this," McCaskill said in a statement Thursday. "I will not be intimidated."

If the scale is so far smaller than the hundreds of cyberattacks launched in 2016, national security leaders say

these relatively light winds could turn into a typhoon at any moment.

"We fully realize that we are just one click of the keyboard away from a similar situation repeating itself," as Coats said recently.

States are paying attention to election security more than they ever have, but as NPR's Miles Parks has reported, there are still 50 different policies and levels of readiness across the country.

In some places, elections officials are as ready as they'll ever be. Others remain highly vulnerable. Secretaries of state and elections officials across the country may not know how robust their preparations are until Election Day.

And there are broader issues. Even if every election in the United States used 100 percent accountable and verifiable paper systems, there are no practical defenses against other weapons in the Russians' active-measures arsenal.

Secretaries of state and elections officials across the country may not know how robust their preparations are until Election Day. Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images hide caption toggle caption

Facebook and Twitter vow that they're cracking down on the use of their platforms by foreign agitators, but they can't stanch everything, especially if influence-mongers return with a broad new wave that uses new accounts, new vectors or new techniques to piggyback on the networks.

Facebook, in particular, is depending more on the use of disclosures within ads on its site, not active countermeasures that bar them from appearing.

Another real problem — if that's the right phrase — is the free press.

If WikiLeaks or another pop-up intermediary began dumping embarrassing material about politicians, would American journalists politely refrain from covering it? Even if they did, the material would still get into the information ecosystem without them.

Reporters might include caveats in their stories — "the damning revelations about Politician X appeared to be part of an active measures campaign against the United States. Now back to the damning revelations about Politician X ..." — but they still would be serving the interests of the attackers.

In the case of an attack on behalf of Democrats, the arguments that Trump and Republicans used in 2016 might be turned against them: Who cares about the origins of this material — whether it came via Russia's military intelligence service or not? As long as it's legitimate, it's fair game.

Millions of Americans concluded the same thing during the 2016 cycle when WikiLeaks published emails hacked from the systems of leading Democratic Party figures — emails stolen, the Justice Department alleges, by Russia's military spy agency.

The Supreme Court has roundly rejected prior restraint, as one well-known constitutional scholar once observed. Trump couldn't order news organizations not to cover revelations that had originated in a foreign cyberattack, even if he wanted to.

If the structural components of a new surge in attacks are easy to imagine, the politics are not. Would it be better for Trump and Republicans to launch a full-on national response to a new spike in active measures? The president has said that is exactly what he would do.

But a wave of interference between now and Election Day also would enable Trump and Republicans to argue the outcome of the 2018 midterm elections, including the return of their reviled Speaker Pelosi, was illegitimate — in the same way Trump's supposed illegitimacy is a shibboleth for the self-styled "Resistance."

How strong the foundation

What hasn't become clear following another all-cartwheeling, all-exploding set of headlines last week is Trump's basis for warning about a Russian campaign benefiting Democrats. Is there real intelligence reporting that suggests Russian leaders intend to launch one or that one is underway now?

Trump is in a position to know. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Congress on Wednesday that he has briefed Trump extensively for months — previously as director of the CIA — about what the intelligence community is reporting about active measures.

Trump also sometimes denies that any interference is taking place and insists the whole story is a "hoax." He phases back and forth, and one consequence is that there is no way to know his own position on a given day and the resulting actions he might order.

Administration officials say that they're preparing no matter what and that the United States will take a much stronger stance against foreign interference than was done in 2016.

Pompeo told Congress that he had warned the Russians that any more attacks would be met with "severe consequences."

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein said recently at the Aspen Security Forum that the Justice Department would begin publicly calling out foreign schemes and step up its efforts to defend American networks from cyberattacks.

At the same time, he warned about the prospect of a new surge in attacks exactly like the one Trump described last week, which is why Rosenstein said it's necessary for a bipartisan response given the peril facing both major parties.

"I want to emphasize that covert propaganda disseminated by foreign adversaries is fundamentally different from domestic partisan wrangling," Rosenstein said. "As Sen. Margaret Chase Smith proclaimed in her 1950 declaration of conscience, we must address foreign national

security threats ‘patriotically as Americans,’ and not ‘politically as Republicans and Democrats.’ “

Voting Systems In Wisconsin, A Key Swing State, Can Be Hacked, Security Experts Warn

By Grigor Atanesian

[Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism](#), July 29, 2018

Visiting Wisconsin on June 28, President Donald Trump tweeted “Russia continues to say they had nothing to do with Meddling in our Election!” It was not the first time the president cast doubt on Russian interference in the 2016 election, contradicting conclusions of the FBI, CIA and National Security Agency, as well as reports by bipartisan committees in both chambers of Congress.

But Russians have been testing the vulnerability of elections in Wisconsin and other states for years, and top U.S. intelligence officials have warned the 2018 midterm elections are a potential target of Russian cyberattacks and disinformation.

A key swing state, Wisconsin was the scene of Russian measures in 2016 that utilized social media and also probed the websites of government agencies.

Wisconsin and other battleground states including Pennsylvania were targeted by a sophisticated social media campaign, according to a recent University of Wisconsin-Madison study headed by journalism professor Young Mie Kim. This campaign tapped into divisive issues like race, gun control and gay and transgender rights. A Twitter account titled @MilwaukeeVoice and styled as a local news outlet was one of 2,752 now-deactivated Twitter bots and trolls — automated or human online fake personas — connected to Russia. Twitter vows further purges of tens of millions of suspicious accounts.

Besides trying to influence Wisconsin voters through political ads and Twitter, alleged Kremlin-linked operatives also probed the website of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. The websites of Ashland, Bayfield and Washburn in northern Wisconsin were targeted from Internet Protocol (IP) addresses listed in the joint FBI and Department of Homeland Security report on Russian malicious activity. And in July 2016, Russian government operatives attacked the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development website, state officials reported.

Early in May, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee reported that “in 2016, cyberactors affiliated with the Russian Government conducted an unprecedented, coordinated nationwide cyber-campaign against state election infrastructures.”

“Russian actors scanned databases for vulnerabilities, attempted intrusions, and in a small number of cases successfully penetrated a voter registration database,” the

committee found. “This activity was part of a larger campaign to prepare to undermine confidence in the voting process. The Committee has not seen any evidence that vote tallies were manipulated or that voter registration information was deleted or modified.”

Such attempts continue. In a motion filed in court on June 12, Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s office wrote that “foreign intelligence services, particularly those of the Russian Federation ... are continuing to engage in interference operations.”

Five top elections experts told the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism that Wisconsin’s voting systems are vulnerable. Some pointed to the Voting Machine Hacking Village demonstration last July at DEFCON, the annual cybersecurity conference held in Las Vegas. Hackers were set loose on more than two dozen voting machines used in the United States.

“By the end of the (four-day) conference, every piece of equipment in the Voting Village

was effectively breached in some manner,” according to a report released after the conference. “Participants with little prior knowledge and only limited tools and resources were quite capable of undermining the confidentiality, integrity and availability of these systems.”

However, municipal and county clerks interviewed by the Center say they are not worried about a cyberattack, citing the fact that voting in Wisconsin is not centrally coordinated but conducted on a local level by 1,854 communities, large and small. They also note that the voting machines are not connected to the internet. As a result, many clerks resist proposals to conduct post-election audits, saying they have no resources for such efforts, which they consider unnecessary.

The next statewide elections in Wisconsin are the primary on Aug. 14 and the general election on Nov. 6.

Throughout this year, the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs chaired by Sen. Ron Johnson, Wisconsin’s Republican senator, has heard testimony from U.S. experts warning of Russia’s continued activities. Yet Johnson is not convinced it is a big problem.

In early July, Johnson visited Moscow with a GOP delegation. Returning home after meetings with Russian lawmakers and the foreign minister, Johnson suggested that to impose sanctions on Russia for the 2016 election meddling was an overreaction.

“The election interference ... is not the greatest threat to our democracy. We’ve blown it way out of proportion,” he told the Washington Examiner.

Others are not so sure. The left-leaning Center for American Progress concluded that Wisconsin’s “failure to carry out post-election audits that test the accuracy of election outcomes leaves the state open to undetected hacking and other Election Day problems.”

J. Alex Halderman, director of the University of Michigan's Center for Computer Security and Society, agreed, saying "Rigorously auditing the outcome of the election is an essential safeguard against cyberattacks."

Halderman was a driving force behind the 2016 recount of the presidential vote in Wisconsin, bankrolled by the campaign of Green Party candidate Jill Stein. Stein's campaign is embroiled in a legal battle in Dane County Circuit Court for access to source code that it believes could reveal vulnerabilities in Wisconsin's voting technology and to what extent the campaign's findings should remain confidential. That case is pending.

Halderman was highly critical of claims that decentralization and diversity of systems would rule out a successful cyberattack.

"Diversity can be a strength, but in a statewide contest, I don't have to hack all the machines," Halderman said, citing Trump's narrow 22,748-vote win in Wisconsin. "I just have to hack some machines."

To illustrate his point: In 2011, a human error made by Waukesha County Clerk Kathy Nickolaus changed the outcome of a statewide Supreme Court election. Nickolaus said she forgot to hit "save" on a vote tally in a Microsoft database, failing to report 14,315 votes, according to an independent investigation of the incident. A recount followed, which switched the apparent winner from Joanne Kloppenburg to incumbent Justice David Prosser.

Recount confirms results, raises concerns

Before and immediately after the 2016 election, reports about malicious Russian activities drew attention to potential vulnerabilities in the voting infrastructure. Stein, who got just 1 percent of the vote in Wisconsin, requested a full recount of all ballots cast in three battleground states that gave a narrow victory to Trump — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Wisconsin was the only state to authorize the recount.

Although it found no evidence of election tampering or foreign interference, the results uncovered thousands of miscounted votes. Most notable was in the city of Marinette, where a few outdated voting machines grossly miscounted votes, with one machine failing to count over 30 percent of the ballots.

"Our best estimate is that at least one in 117 votes (statewide) was miscounted, and probably more," said Barry Burden, political science professor at the UW-Madison. Burden, who is a director of the UW Elections Research Center, led a study of the 2016 recount.

"As a voter, to think that there's one in a hundred chance that my ballot would be miscounted — that would be alarming," Burden said.

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Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell says he is confident in the integrity of the local election systems. "Even now with what happened with Russians intentionally trying to affect the

election, I'm still more worried about a tornado or flood," he says. Photo taken July 19, 2018. COBURN DUKEHART PHOTO

But many Wisconsin election officials say the concern is overblown. Stein's request "was an abuse of the recount prerogative, born of the irrational belief that Wisconsin's highly decentralized and secure elections infrastructure is vulnerable to the kind of meddling that might overturn the will of the voters," Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell wrote in a Wisconsin State Journal op-ed.

McDonell told the Center he is not particularly worried about election tampering in Wisconsin. "Even now with what happened with Russians intentionally trying to affect the election, I'm still more worried about a tornado or flood."

State law has since been changed to prohibit candidates who lose by more than 1 percent of the vote from forcing a recount.

Activists push post-election audits

Among the experts and local activists consulted by the Stein campaign was Karen McKim, a coordinator for the Madison-based grassroots group Wisconsin Election Integrity, which focuses on the "appropriate use and management of election technology" to secure Wisconsin's elections.

In the 2016 presidential race, McKim said she was the first to catch the worst error made in Wisconsin. Even before the recount, she noticed that according to official numbers, roughly half of the 833 voters who cast ballots in the U.S. Senate race in the Oneida County community of Hazelhurst did not vote for president.

McKim reached out to the county clerk, asking whether there was a boycott. It turned out to be a human error; a poll worker was supposed to type in 484 votes for Trump, but accidentally typed the number 44. The outcome had already been certified in a countywide canvass. After McKim identified the mistake, the results were resubmitted.

Such an error, she said, "happens all the time."

McKim has many such stories to tell. In 2014, hundreds of votes in a Stoughton municipal referendum were not initially counted, possibly because of "dust bunnies" that covered the optical scanners' lenses. In Monroe, election officials lost 110 ballots cast in the state Senate Democratic primary of 2014.

A former Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau veteran, McKim not only identifies mistakes but seeks to correct them. Since 2012, she has been advocating post-election audits to verify the accuracy of election outcomes.

She favors a statistically based protocol known as a "risk-limiting audit" which involves counting a small sample of ballots. The procedure has been developed by election officials in collaboration with statisticians and security experts. It is recommended by the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee and has recently become a requirement in

Colorado, Rhode Island and Virginia. Ohio and Washington provide options for counties to run different types of audits, including these types of risk-limiting audits, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Karen McKim, a Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau veteran, advocates for post-election risk-limiting audits to ensure accurate results. In the 2016 presidential race, McKim was the first person to catch one of the most dramatic mistakes made in Wisconsin. Photo taken July 13, 2018 at a meeting of the grassroots group Wisconsin Election Integrity at the Imperial Garden restaurant in Middleton, Wisconsin.

Coburn Dukehart

In 2014, Wisconsin Election Integrity activists had a major victory, convincing the Government Accountability Board (now the Elections Commission) to change instructions clarifying county and municipal clerks' right to verify the accuracy of the election outcomes. McKim said she is not aware of any clerks who have implemented this measure.

In 2016, McKim unsuccessfully ran for Dane County clerk. She did not expect to win, but used the campaign to raise awareness of post-election audits.

What have her efforts wrought? "Unanswered emails. Invitations to meetings unaccepted, even unacknowledged. Testimony at public meetings ignored," McKim said.

Some officials skeptical audits needed

Wisconsin law already requires election officials to conduct voting equipment audits after general elections. The procedure, however, does not verify the accuracy of election outcomes, only whether the machines functioned properly. But that could change.

Wisconsin Elections Commission Interim Administrator Meagan Wolfe said her staff recently observed Colorado's risk-limiting audit process. She said the agency is looking for ways to implement such audits consistent with existing law. The measure will be discussed at the next WEC meeting on Sept. 25, Wolfe said.

Burden, the UW professor, said it likely will take a change in state law to require clerks to do post-election audits.

"If policymakers in the Legislature think that this security element is a good idea, they could pass a law pretty quickly, using models from other states, like Colorado, to implement it here," he said.

Although McDonnell agrees risk-limiting post-election audits are probably a good idea, he does not plan to implement the measure anytime soon. He is confident in the integrity of Dane County's system, noting that software that tallies the votes and programs the machine to read the ballots "are not connected to the internet."

Said McDonnell: "I'd say we're safe."

McDonnell also said any significant change in how Dane County votes would be immediately obvious to him. "I know how every ward votes. You going to have Willy Street vote

Republican? I mean ..." McDonnell smiled, naming one of Madison's most liberal neighborhoods.

Like McDonnell, the majority of municipal clerks are not particularly worried about hacking, said Barbara Goeckner, president of the Wisconsin Municipal Clerks Association.

"I know that the (Wisconsin Elections Commission) is overseeing election security in the equipment we use, the processes of the conducting of our elections and how our equipment is tested and certified," said Goeckner, adding that the diversity of Wisconsin's election systems is the best security check.

Goeckner added that conducting post-election audits is burdensome and expensive.

"To do those audits before certification is really difficult," she said. "The difficulty lies in the timeline to complete the audits. Elections are not the only duties clerks have to complete. However, they take up a great deal of our time while we are preparing, conducting and finalizing them afterward."

One advantage Wisconsin has over some other states: Paper ballots. No matter what kind of machine is used at a polling station, there is also a paper ballot produced for every vote cast.

But in interviews with the Center, leading national experts said that keeping the paper trail is not enough. They said robust post-election risk-limiting audits are a crucial tool to ensure accurate results.

"That's the reason why you have paper — it shouldn't be for show," said Lawrence Norden, the deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. "There's no question Wisconsin doesn't do the kind of audits it should be doing."

Students participate in a voting demonstration at the University of Michigan in 2018, organized by J. Alex Halderman, director of the University of Michigan's Center for Computer Security and Society. Students were asked to pick which school was better — Michigan or Ohio State. From his office computer, Halderman remotely altered the tally, making Ohio State the winner in a race where the majority of voters picked Michigan.

University of Michigan Computer Science and Engineering Department

Hackers pierce veil of security

In April, Halderman staged a demonstration on how to hack AccuVote TS and TSX touch-screen voting machines. Machines breached in Halderman's experiment were in use in 2016 in municipalities in about half of the states, including Wisconsin. As of Jan. 1 of this year, municipalities in the following Wisconsin counties were using AccuVote TSX machines for voters with disabilities: Calumet, Manitowoc, Walworth and Waushara counties.

In the demonstration, University of Michigan students were asked to pick the better school in a race with two

candidates — Michigan itself and The Ohio State University. From his office computer, Halderman remotely altered the tally, making Ohio State the winner in a race where the majority of voters picked Michigan.

Vulnerabilities in other types of voting machines were demonstrated in the Voting Machine Hacking Village at last year's DEFCON gathering. The co-founder of the village is Jake Braun, former director of White House and public liaison for the Department of Homeland Security. Braun, who is also a strategic advisor to DHS and the Pentagon on cybersecurity, wanted to draw lawmakers' attention to vulnerabilities in the national election infrastructure.

During the event, more than 25 voting machines and electronic poll books were breached. Some of them had default usernames and passwords, such as "admin" and "abcde," while others turned out to have internal parts manufactured in China, which could be designed to be vulnerable to manipulation, according to the DEFCON report.

While all the voting systems hacked by DEFCON participants and Halderman operate on touch-screen machines, experts also question the assertion that optical scanners, which are in wide use in Wisconsin, are unhackable.

A recent New York Times Magazine report explored the ways those machines can be subject to attack, even when not connected to the internet. It cited the case of a machine in Pennsylvania's Venango County that was miscounting votes.

Although the machine was offline, officials found it had remote-access software, which allowed a county contractor to work on the machine remotely — but also made it vulnerable to hacking from someone else. (The miscounting turned out to be a "simple calibration error," the magazine reported.)

Like that county, some Wisconsin counties outsource pre-election programming to equipment vendors — private companies whose operations are not regulated by any federal standards. It is unclear how widespread the practice is in Wisconsin.

"The WEC does not currently track which, or how many, counties, program their equipment in-house or by using a vendor," Wolfe said.

According to a leaked National Security Agency report published by The Intercept, an unnamed U.S. voting software supplier was the target of a cyberattack conducted by the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, better known as the GRU, the intelligence agency whose 12 officers were recently indicted as part of the Mueller investigation.

Summarizing the leaked report, the Intercept said, "Russian military intelligence executed a cyberattack on at least one U.S. voting software supplier and sent spear-phishing emails to more than 100 local election officials just days before last November's presidential election."

Wisconsin, Congress take some action

In March 2017, Wisconsin Democratic U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan introduced the Secure America's Future Elections Act that, among other things, would require routine audits of election outcomes. Since then, the bill gained 22 cosponsors but has not gotten out of committee.

This March, Congress passed a bipartisan measure allocating \$380 million to boost election systems security in all 50 states. Wisconsin received \$7 million.

Wisconsin's grant will support six full-time election and cybersecurity positions at the Wisconsin Elections Commission. The commission also plans to strengthen WisVote, the statewide voter registration system, and conduct election security trainings for local officials.

Wolfe said all of the resources, including the six security-related positions, will be in place by the November election.

Despite this, McKim said she plans to keep pushing for the audits.

"What gives me the energy to keep going through over six years is because it is so easily fixed," McKim said. "All they have to do is unseal those bags and count votes in public and prove that the voting machines are working right. But they don't. I just keep thinking that next month, all the election officials are going to wake up and say, 'Oh, we can do this.' And they don't."

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Replace Ga.'s Risky Touchscreen Voting Machines

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), July 27, 2018

As the 2016 cyber-attacks on U.S. elections continue unabated this election year, most everyone agrees that Georgia's aging, insecure voting machines must be replaced with a new system to increase public confidence.

Georgia legislators tried this spring to authorize purchase of a new system, but the flawed legislation failed. That's a good thing. It would have made the situation worse, not better.

In the wake of this failure, Secretary of State Brian Kemp formed a blue-ribbon Commission on Secure, Accessible and Fair Elections (SAFE) to study the options for Georgia's next voting system. In short, the Secretary set up a

way for Georgia to dig itself out of its election integrity hole and leapfrog to the front of the pack nationwide. At SAFE's first meeting, Mr. Kemp sabotaged his own commission.

The laudable goal of that meeting was to describe Georgia's current system. Briefing slides are available online. Not apparent in the published material is a disturbing pattern of giving SAFE false and misleading information. If not corrected, the Commission's recommendations will be as flawed as other efforts to fix the current system. Here are five egregious examples of such misinformation.

1.) SAFE was falsely told that current touchscreen voting machines are mandated by Georgia Law. The touchscreen "mandate" is an easily reversible administrative action of the five-member State Election Board. Here's why it matters. These machines have been hacked repeatedly and at will. Most states subsequently abandoned them. Georgia law specifically authorizes the use of optical scanning of paper ballots, a more-secure alternative.

2. SAFE was not told that Georgia's touchscreens violate the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA). HAVA requires a paper record of votes cast so that manual recounts can be conducted. Election Director Chris Harvey told SAFE members that electronic ballot records stored in Georgia's voting machines are the same as paper records because a paper printout can be created. This claim would require the state to trust the validity of internally stored electronic records on hacked machines. Data stored on compromised machines must be presumed to be untrustworthy.

3.) Georgia owns 1,000 paper ballot scanners — enough to conduct elections — but SAFE was misinformed about the feasibility of using them. If 3 million voters cast their ballots in November, the average load per scanner is 3,000 ballots. The entire election could be conducted quickly and efficiently in this way. Harvey's claim that the overloaded machines would be "smoking" is unsupported by evidence. Furthermore, other states have upgraded their scanning equipment and warehoused scanners identical to Georgia's. Election officials I have spoken with in those states are willing to loan this equipment to Georgia.

4.) SAFE was misleadingly told that scanning of paper ballots is "old fashioned" and inconsistent with Georgia's high-tech image. Just the reverse is true. Georgia's reputation has been severely damaged by a series of technology- and cybersecurity-related fiascos. Election officials conflated hand-marking and hand-counting of paper ballots, made up claims about the "hackability" of paper ballots, and characterized paper ballots as a "step backward." Cybersecurity experts agree that hand-marked paper ballots are the safe, modern alternative, a position that has been endorsed by the Department of Homeland Security and Congressional committees.

5.) SAFE was misinformed about the vulnerability of Georgia's current system to cyberattacks. Georgia's current

election system is at high risk of attack and penetration. Claims that "voting machines are not connected to the Internet" (they are) bolster a false sense of security. Impartial examinations of Georgia's election system have debunked these claims that Georgia's system is secure. Intelligence agencies assesses the risk of attack as high. No forensic analysis of whether votes have been changed has occurred. National media coverage of Georgia's weaknesses is relentless. Election officials have shamefully excluded the public from legally protected observation. SAFE is being misled into believing self-serving, false assurances.

It is certain that Georgia's voting machines will be scrapped sometime soon. SAFE recommendations will help determine public confidence in future elections. Mr. Kemp owes it to his commission and all Georgia citizens to correct this misinformation and accurately explain the cybersecurity realities of election integrity.

Richard DeMillo holds the Charlotte B. and Roger C. Warren Chair in Computer Science at Georgia Tech. He studies election security and serves on the advisory board of Verified Voting.

Official: Russian Hackers Targeted 2016 Montana Election

By Matt Volz

[Washington Times](#), July 27, 2018

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Montana's top elections official said Friday that Russian hackers unsuccessfully probed the state's election systems for weaknesses in 2016, an acknowledgment that contradicts his staff's previous comments that Montana was not among the 21 or more states targeted.

Secretary of State Corey Stapleton wrote in his occasional newsletter that Russian agents tried to interfere with the 2016 elections and that "almost half the states (including Montana) were scanned for weaknesses in our elections systems."

"While no votes were changed by the Russians in our 2016 election cycle, there was a clear and significant threat to our nation's ability to conduct fair elections," wrote Stapleton, a Republican.

Elections Director Dana Corson in March told The Associated Press in response to a 50-state survey on election security that Montana was not among states targeted by hackers in 2016. At the time, Corson declined to speak further about the state's election security measures, saying: "We can't discuss things with election security."

Stapleton told the AP on Friday there was no contradiction between his assessment and Corson's because "scanning is not hacking" and that "it comes down to how you're interpreting 'targeted.'"

“Scanning for weaknesses is different from attempting to hack,” Stapleton said. “We have used restraint because you don’t want to alarm people. It is also improper not to let people know that that threat exists. To find that balance, we have actually chosen to use the words that (the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) has advised us.”

Stapleton said he could not provide details about the extent to which Russian hackers probed Montana’s elections systems, because Homeland Security officials have not fully disclosed those details to state officials. He said that he knows somebody was trying to test the systems’ capabilities, but there was no breach.

U.S. intelligence officials have warned that Russia may attempt to disrupt U.S. elections again this year. The attempts to hack into the election systems of at least 21 states in 2016 did not succeed in manipulating any votes, but U.S. security agencies have said they did manage to gain access to the voter rolls in Illinois.

Stapleton said in his newsletter that his main concerns about election security include the consistent training of elections personnel throughout Montana’s 56 counties in the face of potential attacks from nations like Russia.

Stapleton denied in the interview that his statement in the newsletter on Friday was his first public acknowledgment of the state being targeted by hackers. He could not cite any past public statements, his office never issued a press release and a database search did not turn up any news reports of him addressing the matter.

“We said it wide and clear,” he said. “I don’t think anybody reported it because I don’t think anyone was interested.”

How The Russian Government Used Disinformation And Cyber Warfare In 2016 Election

By Timothy Summers

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), July 27, 2018

(THE CONVERSATION) The Soviet Union and now Russia under Vladimir Putin have waged a political power struggle against the West for nearly a century. Spreading false and distorted information – called “dezinformatsiya” after the Russian word for “disinformation” – is an age-old strategy for coordinated and sustained influence campaigns that have interrupted the possibility of level-headed political discourse. Emerging reports that Russian hackers targeted a Democratic senator’s 2018 reelection campaign suggest that what happened in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election may be set to recur.

As an ethical hacker, security researcher and data analyst, I have seen firsthand how disinformation is becoming the new focus of cyberattacks. In a recent talk, I suggested that cyberwarfare is no longer just about the technical details

of computer ports and protocols. Rather, disinformation and social media are rapidly becoming the best hacking tools. With social media, anyone – even Russian intelligence officers and professional trolls – can widely publish misleading content. As legendary hacker Kevin Mitnick put it, “it’s easier to manipulate people rather than technology.”

Two sets of federal indictments – one in February and another in July – allege in detail how a private company linked to Putin and the Russian military itself worked to polarize American political discourse and sway the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Cybersecurity experts in the U.S. knew that the Russian intelligence agencies were conducting these acts of information warfare and cyberwarfare, but I doubt they had any idea how comprehensive and integrated they were – until now.

Russia’s propaganda machine duped American voters

The operation was complex. What is publicly known now is perhaps most easily understood in two pieces, the subjects of separate federal indictments.

First, a billionaire Russian businessman and Putin associate allegedly assembled a network of troll factories: private Russian companies engaging in a massive disinformation campaign. Their employees posed as Americans, created racially and politically divisive social media groups and pages, and developed fake news articles and commentary to build political animosity within the American public.

Second, the Russian military intelligence agency, known by its Russian acronym as the GRU, allegedly used coordinated hacking to target more than 500 people and institutions in the United States. The Russian hackers downloaded potentially damaging information and released it to the public via WikiLeaks and under various aliases including “DCLeaks” and “Guccifer 2.0.”

Online trolls manipulated your opinions

The people involved did not fit the stereotypical picture of internet trolls. One leading Russian troll factory was a company called the Internet Research Agency, reportedly with all the trappings of a real corporation, including a graphics department to create incendiary images, a foreign department dedicated to following political discourse in other countries and an IT department to make sure trolls had reliable computers and internet connections. Employees, mostly 18 to 20 years old, were paid as much as US\$2,100 a month for creating fake social media accounts and blogs to distribute disinformation to Americans.

They were employed to take advantage of deepening political polarization in the U.S. The Russians saw this as an opportunity to stir up conflict – like poking a stick into a beehive. These trolls were instructed to stir up racial tensions, stage “flash mobs” and organize activist campaigns –

sometimes announcing events for opposing groups at the same times and locations.

One ex-troll told a Russian independent TV network that his job included writing incendiary comments and creating fake posts on political forums: "The way you chose to stir up the situation, whether it was commenting [on] the news section or on political forums, it didn't really matter." In 2015, well before the 2016 election, the troll-factory network had more than 800 people doing this kind of work, producing propaganda videos, infographics, memes, reports, news, interviews and various analytical materials to persuade the public.

America never stood a chance.

Focusing on social media

It's no surprise that these Russian trolls spent most of their time on Facebook and Instagram: Two-thirds of Americans get at least some news on social media. The trolls spread out across both platforms, seeking to encourage conflict on any topic that was getting a lot of attention: immigration, religion, the Black Lives Matter movement and other hot-button issues.

When describing how he managed all of the fake social media accounts, the ex-troll said: "First, you gotta be a redneck from Kentucky, then you need to be a white guy from Minnesota, you've slaved away all your life and paid your taxes, and then 15 minutes later you are from New York posting in some Black slang."

Then, the indictments reveal, the GRU entered this increasingly fraught online political discourse.

The GRU joins in

Like another significant political scandal, the GRU effort allegedly started with a break-in to Democratic National Committee records – but this time it was a digital burglary. It wasn't particularly sophisticated, either, using two common hacking techniques, spearphishing and malicious software.

As the July indictment details, starting in March 2016, Russian military operatives sent a series of fake emails, disguised to look real, to more than 300 people associated with Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. One of the targets was Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, who fell for the scheme and unwittingly handed over more than 50,000 emails to the Russians.

Around the same time, the Russian hackers allegedly began searching for technical vulnerabilities in the Democratic organizations' computer networks. They used techniques and specialized malicious software that Russians had used in other hacking efforts, including against the German Parliament and the French television network TV5 Monde. By April 2016, the hackers had gained access to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee systems, exploring servers and secretly extracting sensitive data. They

located a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee staffer who also had privileges in the Democratic National Committee systems, and thereby got into the Democratic National Committee networks too, extracting more information.

When the Democratic National Committee realized there was unusual data traffic in its systems, the group hired a private cybersecurity firm, which in June 2016 publicly announced that its investigation had concluded that Russia was behind the hacking. At that point, the Russians allegedly tried to delete traces of their presence on the networks. But they kept all the data they had stolen.

Opposing Hillary Clinton

As early as April 2016, the GRU was allegedly trying to use the Democrats' confidential documents and email messages to stir up political trouble in the U.S. There is evidence that the Russian government, or people acting on its behalf, offered key people in the Trump campaign damaging information on Clinton.

In July 2016, the indictments say, the GRU began releasing many of the Democrats' documents and email messages, mainly through WikiLeaks, an internet site dedicated to anonymous publishing of secret information.

All of this effort was, according to the indictments, set up to undermine Hillary Clinton in the eyes of the American public. Putin definitely wanted Trump to win – as the Russian president himself acknowledged while standing next to Trump in Helsinki in July. And the trolls were instructed to go after her savagely: A former Russian troll said, "Everything about Hillary Clinton had to be negative and you really had to tear into her. It was all about the leaked email, the corruption scandals, and the fact that she is super rich."

The indictments describe in detail how information warfare and cyberwarfare were used as political tools to advance the interests of people in Russia. Something similar may be set to happen in 2018, too.

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/how-the-russian-government-used-disinformation-and-cyber-warfare-in-2016-election-an-ethical-hacker-explains-99989>.

No, It Wasn't Some Hacker On A Bed Someplace

[Washington Post](#), July 27, 2018

CLEAR AWAY the hot air and deception, and recent disclosures about Russian interference with the 2016 U.S. presidential election offer a sobering glimpse of cyberconflict today. While President Vladimir Putin of Russia denies his government engaged in it, and President Trump calls it a "witch hunt," the extraordinarily detailed indictment brought by special counsel Robert S. Mueller III shows the attacks on the

election were carried out by uniformed military officers in a unit with a Moscow address. This is not amateur hour.

Mr. Mueller's charges against 12 officers of the Russian military intelligence organization, the GRU, take the case down to street level, identifying the two units — No. 26165, located at 20 Komsomolsky Prospekt, Moscow, and No. 74455, located at 22 Kirova St., in Khimki, outside of Moscow — that carried out the attacks on the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign. The indictment shows a dozen officers working to penetrate and disrupt the Democrats by emptying out their emails and computer data and then leaking it. They appeared to use relatively well-known methods such as spear-phishing to steal credentials, anonymous servers to spirit away the data and cryptocurrency to hide the money trail.

At the end of each operation, it was Mr. Putin's officers who reaped the harvest. For years there has been much speculation that Russia's spy services were hiring hackers or criminal elements to do their dirty work, and they probably are. But this case shows that the Russian state cyber-operators are not just boys from Tomsok.

Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats declared July 13 that warning lights on cyberattacks from Russia are "blinking red," similar to threats seen before 9/11. A fresh example appeared this week when Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri, a Democrat running for reelection, disclosed that her Senate computers had been targeted by Russian government intruders.

China, too, is a major state actor in cyberconflict; the U.S. intelligence agencies report that Beijing continues to steal intellectual property from U.S. companies despite a 2015 agreement intended to curb the practice.

Despite these urgent threats, there is scant sign of an effective U.S. government response. Mr. Trump's National Security Council has been hampered by divisions and elimination of a White House cybersecurity coordinator. Rather than combat renewed Russian interference, the White House rails against the investigation into Moscow's meddling in the 2016 campaign. A meeting of senior officials was finally scheduled for Friday. But the hour is late.

Cyberconflict is coming to the forefront of competition and coercion among states, with few rules of the road. The United States must be ready for this assault from Russia and others, and clear-eyed about it. Mr. Trump said dismissively in December 2016 of the election hacking: "It could be somebody sitting in a bed someplace." Now we know it was not.

BORDER WALL

Trump Willing To Shut Down Government Over Border Security

By Darlene Superville

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump said Sunday that he would consider shutting down the government if Democrats refuse to vote for his immigration proposals, including a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Republicans, trying to protect their majority in Congress, are playing down the chance of a shutdown as the November election nears. Trump, however, isn't backing away from the idea.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall!" Trump tweeted. "Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT!"

"We need great people coming into our Country!" Trump said.

Trump returned to the idea of shutting down the government over the border wall after meeting at the White House last week with House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to discuss the fall legislative agenda.

McConnell, asked about a shutdown during a Kentucky radio interview, said it was not going to happen. He did acknowledge, however, that the border funding issue was unlikely to be resolved before the midterm elections.

Ryan said after the meeting: "The president's willing to be patient to make sure that we get what we need so that we can get that done." He added that money for the wall was "not a question of if, it's a question of when."

Trump campaigned on the promise of building a border wall to deter illegal immigration and making Mexico pay for it. Mexico has refused.

Congress has given the president some wall funding but far from the \$25 billion he has requested. Trump wants changes to legal immigration, including scrapping a visa lottery program. In addition, he wants to end the practice of releasing immigrants caught entering the country illegally on the condition that they show up for court hearings.

Trump has also demanded that the U.S. shift to an immigration system based more on merit and less on family ties.

Democrats and some Republicans have objected to some of the changes Trump seeks.

The federal budget year ends Sept. 30, and lawmakers will spend much of August in their states campaigning for reelection. The House is now in recess, returning after Labor Day. The Senate remains in session and is set to go on break the week of Aug. 6 before returning for the rest of the month. McConnell canceled most of the Senate's recess to give senators time to work on the annual spending bills that fund government operations.

Both chambers will have a short window to approve a spending bill before government funding expires.

Trump would be taking a political risk if he does allow most government functions to lapse on Oct. 1 — the first day of the new budget year — roughly a month before the Nov. 6 elections, when Republican control of both the House and Senate is at stake.

Some Republican lawmakers doubted the government would be forced to shut down.

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that he didn't think shutting down the government just before the elections would be helpful "so let's try and avoid it."

Rep. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, the campaign arm for GOP House candidates, agreed.

"I think we're going to make sure we keep the government open, but we're going to get better policies on immigration," he said on ABC's "This Week." "The president, I think, wants us to have policies that work for America and work for Americans, and I think that's what we are going to move forward with."

House Republicans released a spending bill this month that provides \$5 billion next year to build Trump's wall, a plan he supports.

Democrats have long opposed financing Trump's wall but lack the votes by themselves to block House approval of that amount. They do, however, have the strength to derail legislation in the closely divided Senate.

The \$5 billion is well above the \$1.6 billion in the Senate version of the bill, which would finance the Department of Homeland Security. The higher amount matches what Trump has privately sought in conversations with Republican lawmakers, according to a GOP congressional aide who wasn't authorized to publicly talk about private discussions and spoke on condition of anonymity.

At the White House meeting last week, Trump, Ryan and McConnell agreed that Congress is on track to enact more than half of federal spending before the new budget year begins Oct. 1, but that DHS funding, including the border wall money, doesn't have to be settled before then, according to a person familiar with the meeting who was not authorized to discuss it publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Two leading Democrats — Reps. Nita Lowey of New York and California's Lucille Roybal-Allard — called the \$5 billion a waste that "only further enables this administration's obsession with cruel attacks on immigrants."

Trump also tweeted on Sunday that there are "consequences when people cross our Border illegally" and claimed many who do so are "using children for their own sinister purposes."

Trump's tweet came several days after the government said more than 1,800 children separated at the U.S.-Mexico border under Trump's "zero-tolerance" immigration policy have been reunited with parents and sponsors. A federal judge had ordered the reunions to be completed by last Thursday, but hundreds of children remain separated. The administration says some of their parents have criminal histories.

"Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not — and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes," Trump said.

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President Donald Trump Threatens To Shut Down Government Over Border Wall Funding

By Tom Vanden Brook

[USA Today](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump threatened Sunday to shut down the federal government unless Democrats in Congress support his immigration initiatives, including money for a wall on the border with Mexico.

Trump lashed out at an immigration policy that allows up to 50,000 immigrants to receive visas each year and the practice of arresting immigrants for crossing the border illegally and freeing them until their cases are adjudicated.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall!" Trump tweeted. "Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!"

Last week, Trump met with Republican leaders in Congress to discuss a plan that would avoid a shutdown in the fall. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., presented Trump with a plan that would fund the government and delay the debate over immigration until after the midterm elections in November.

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that such a move could hurt Republican chances in the fall.

"So I certainly don't like playing shutdown politics," Johnson said.

Trump wants \$5 billion for the border wall this year, but he signaled to leaders that he might be willing to wait until after the midterms, given that Senate Democrats are unlikely to agree to that amount. His latest tweet throws those discussions into question.

The government has twice gone unfunded this year. In January, lawmakers were at another spending-and-immigration impasse, largely over the fates of undocumented immigrants facing deportation. The shutdown lasted less than three days.

A few weeks later, in February, the government went unfunded for 5½ hours after Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., protested spending increases in a funding bill.

Trump: I Will ‘Shut Down’ Government Over Wall Funding, Catch And Release

By John Binder

[Breitbart](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump says he will “shut down” the federal government if the Republicans and Democrats in Congress do not deliver border wall funding and an end to the Catch and Release loophole system in their latest funding bill.

On Sunday, Trump took to Twitter to not only call the United States’ immigration laws the “DUMBEST & WORST” around the world — the U.S. imports more than 1.5 million foreign nationals every year — but also sent a warning to Congress where he says the government will be shut down if he does not get his funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and an end to Catch and Release.

Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not — and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes. Congress must act on fixing the DUMBEST & WORST immigration laws anywhere in the world! Vote “R”

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

I would be willing to “shut down” government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

House Republicans, led by Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS), have tied \$5 billion in southern border wall funding to a slew of pro-open borders and pro-big business immigration changes.

For example, as Breitbart News noted, GOP-run House appropriations committee voted to revive President Obama’s Catch and Release policies — where illegal aliens and asylum seekers are caught at the border, then released into the U.S. general public — by deliberately defunding Attorney General Jeff Sessions’ tightening of asylum laws.

Yoder and the GOP-led House appropriations committee’s efforts to codify the Catch and Release policy into law would give the entire populations of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras — 32 million Central Americans — the right to migrate to the U.S., as well as any other foreign nationals who travel to the country and claim they are fleeing

gangs or domestic violence. This translates to a foreign population at least half the size of the American midwest being given the right to migrate to the country under the GOP’s Homeland Security funding measure.

The border wall funding has also been tied to a green card giveaway for at least 200,000 Indian nationals who are in the U.S. on guest worker visas, Breitbart News reported, along with a tripling of the number of H-2B visa workers who let into the country and allowed to take U.S. blue collar jobs and an expansion of the H-2A visa program, which would deliver more cheap foreign workers to farms across the country.

.@KrisKobach1787: “Asylum would become meaningless and rampant with fraud because anyone can say that they live in fear of gang violence. This would be a colossal mistake for Republicans to support this.”

— John Binder (@JxhnBinder) July 27, 2018

Despite immigration being the number one issue for GOP voters in the midterm elections, Senate and House Republicans are already touting a plan to not fund the border wall before the midterms.

In a recent interview with local media, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said he would “probably” hold off on funding the border wall until after the midterm elections.

“That’s not going to happen,” McConnell said when asked about a shut down of the government.

Midterm voters have repeatedly said they want less immigration to the U.S. A majority of swing voters and white voters in battleground districts say immigration from Central America and Mexico has made life in America “worse.” More than four-in-nine black Americans in swing districts say the same of immigration.

Meanwhile, nearly two-in-three likely American voters say they want to see legal immigration to the U.S. reduced, as Breitbart News noted. A most recent poll found that a majority of conservatives say they generally oppose all immigration to the U.S.

Most recent polling finds that a majority of white, black, and Hispanic Americans support Trump’s agenda of increased immigration enforcement with stricter measures.

Congress has until September 30 to fund the federal government.

Currently, the U.S. admits more than 1.5 million legal and illegal immigrants every year. In 2016, the legal and illegal immigrant population reached a record high of 44 million. By 2023, the legal and illegal immigrant population is expected to make up nearly 15 percent of the entire U.S. population if current immigration levels continue.

Trump Vows Government Shutdown To Force Funding For Border Wall

By Saagar Enjeti

[Daily Caller](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump threatened to shut down the government if lawmakers do not fully fund his proposed border wall and enact his immigration priorities.

Trump's Sunday tweet is likely to spark a high stakes showdown with Democratic lawmakers who have pledged not to give in to his demands. The fight could lead right into the November midterm elections and put immigration as a centerpiece issue in the last stages of the campaign season.

Trump has long been frustrated by lack of effort to fully fund his proposed \$25 billion wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The White House originally tried to enact wall funding and immigration priorities by tying demands to an expiration of DACA. The DACA program allowed hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to remain in the U.S. and work without consequences.

Trump Willing To 'shut Down' Government Over Border Security

By Mark Moore

[New York Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump said he'd be willing to "shut down" the government unless Democrats in Congress help pass immigration reform, including funding for his long-touted border wall, saying "we need great people coming into our Country!"

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT!," he posted on Twitter Sunday. "We need great people coming into our Country!"

Trump spent much of the weekend at his golf resort in New Jersey railing about Democrats not supporting his immigration policies, saying all they do is "Resist" and "Obstruct," while claiming they want "Open Borders."

Earlier Sunday, he said "there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally," referring to the separation of children from their parents, and called on Congress to repair "the DUMBEST & WORST" immigration laws in the world.

He concluded with a campaign message: "Vote 'R.'"

His administration has come under blistering criticism for separating children from their parents over its "zero tolerance" immigration crackdown to deter immigrants from trying to cross the border illegally.

The government in a court filing said it had met a Thursday deadline set by a federal judge by reuniting more than 1,800 children with their parents or guardians.

But another 711 children would remain separated because their parents either had been deported or had criminal records.

Trump: I Would Be Willing To 'Shut Down' Government Over Border Security

By Andrew Kugle

[Washington Free Beacon](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump tweeted Sunday that he would be willing to "shut down" the government if he doesn't get border security legislation that includes funding for the wall, eliminating the visa lottery and ending the practice of catch and release.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!" Trump tweeted.

I would be willing to "shut down" government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

Trump's threat to shut down the government comes as Congress works to pass appropriation bills. Congress must pass the bills to keep the government funded by Sept. 30 to prevent a shutdown. If unable to pass appropriation bills, Congress will most likely resort to an omnibus bill, a spending bill that covers multiple budget areas.

Before the president tweeted his threat about shutting down the government, he also tweeted about immigration and how Congress needs to fix the "dumbest and worst" immigration laws in the world.

"Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not – and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes. Congress must act on fixing the DUMBEST & WORST immigration laws anywhere in the world! Vote 'R,'" he said.

Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not – and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes. Congress must act on fixing the DUMBEST & WORST immigration laws anywhere in the world! Vote "R"

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

The Trump administration triggered bipartisan backlash by implementing a zero-tolerance policy toward illegal border crossings, charging all individuals who cross the border illegally with unlawful entry. The policy resulted in the separation of minors from their parents. Due to the backlash,

Trump signed an executive order to stop separating parents and children at the U.S. border. The Trump administration is now working to meet a federal judge's deadline to reunite families.

In the past, the president has decried government shutdowns and said they would be "devastating" to the military.

"A government shutdown will be devastating to our military...something the Dems care very little about!" Trump tweeted at the beginning of 2018.

A government shutdown will be devastating to our military...something the Dems care very little about!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) January 18, 2018

Potential Government Shutdown Looming Without Border Wall Funding

By Timothy Meads

[Townhall](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald J. Trump indicated today that he would be willing to "shut down the government" if Democrats refused to give him the necessary funding for the border security, including the long-promised "wall" along the southern border.

President Trump has made similar remarks in the past. "[Democrats] don't want the wall," Trump said in May. "But we're going to get the wall, even if we have to think about closing up the country for a while."

And in April, at a campaign rally, the president said, "We come up again on September 28th and if we don't get border security we will have no choice, we will close down the country because we need border security."

"First, we must protect the American people, the homeland and our great American way of life. This strategy recognizes that we cannot secure our nation if we do not secure our borders. So, for the first time ever, American strategy now includes a serious plan to defend our homeland," President Trump said last December.

"It calls for the construction of a wall on our southern border, ending chain migration and the horrible visa and lottery programs, closing loopholes that undermine enforcement, and strongly supporting our Border Patrol agents, ICE officers, and Homeland Security Personnel."

President Trump also reminded Congress that many illegal aliens, parents or not, take advantage of America's lax immigration policies which results in serious consequences for the American people.

Trump Threatens Again To Shut Down Federal Government Over Border-Wall Funding

By Philip Rucker, Robert Costa And Damian Paletta

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump threatened Sunday to shut down the federal government this fall if Congress does not pass sweeping changes to immigration laws, including appropriating more public money to build his long-promised border wall.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall!" Trump tweeted. "Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!"

Trump's shutdown warning — which he has made before — escalates the stakes ahead of a Sept. 30 government funding deadline, raising the possibility of a political showdown before the Nov. 6 midterm elections that Republican congressional leaders had hoped to avoid. A funding fight also could prove a distraction from Republican efforts in the Senate to confirm Trump Supreme Court nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh by Oct. 1.

Trump faced immediate words of caution from top Republicans, including Rep. Steve Stivers (Ohio), who leads the National Republican Congressional Committee, which coordinates campaign efforts for GOP House candidates.

"I don't think we're going to shut down the government. You know, I think we're going to make sure we keep the government open, but we're going to get better policies on immigration," Stivers said on ABC News's "This Week."

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, told CBS News's "Face the Nation" that he supports the president's effort to pass conservative immigration policies but disagreed with his brinkmanship.

"I don't like playing shutdown politics. I don't think it'd be helpful, so let's try to avoid it," Johnson said.

On the other side of the aisle, Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (N.M.), chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said Democrats did not feel compelled to respond to Trump's threat.

"Democrats want to work together in a bipartisan way when it comes to comprehensive immigration reform," Lujan told ABC News, adding that "Democrats are standing strong when it comes to a comprehensive immigration reform conversation with the American people that is fair, that is tough."

Trump's declaration on Twitter surprised some lawmakers who have been eager to avoid a bruising and politically charged funding fight and highlighted his intense desire to make progress on signature agenda items that have stalled.

The president has not received from Congress as much funding as he has requested for his proposed wall along the Mexican border. Trump also has been advocating for a number of changes to immigration laws, including ending the

visa lottery program as well as “catch and release” — the practice of releasing from detention immigrants caught entering the country illegally if they agree to court hearings.

Trump met Wednesday with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) and discussed the upcoming spending measure. The president signaled in the meeting that he was on board with McConnell and Ryan’s strategy to fund the government smoothly through “minibuses,” or smaller packages of spending bills that had been moving through the House and Senate, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

But in recent days, Trump has also spoken with several outside political allies who have urged him to strike a tougher line on the border wall as a means of pressuring Democrats and rallying his core voters in November, according to two people briefed on those discussions.

Trump has sought to make immigration a core campaign theme heading into the midterms. He has defended his administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy, arguing that some parents who have been separated from their children under this policy are criminals.

On Sunday, Trump tweeted: “Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not — and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes. Congress must act on fixing the DUMBEST & WORST immigration laws anywhere in the world! Vote ‘R.’ “

It is unclear whether simply threatening to shut down the government could push Democrats to agree to fund construction of the wall, particularly because Trump has backed down at the last minute during previous standoffs.

Both last year and this year, Trump said he would shut down the government if Democrats didn’t agree to fund construction of the wall. Both times, Democrats refused, and both times, Trump agreed to sign spending bills that did not include funds for a new wall along the southern border.

Spending bills have appropriated funds to replace existing walls or barriers, something Trump has tried to promote to his supporters as signs of progress. The last spending bill funded \$1.6 billion for border barriers, but that money does not apply to new construction.

There was a brief government shutdown in January after Senate Democrats refused to back a spending package because of Trump’s move to potentially force the deportation of immigrants who had been brought to the United States illegally as children. But Democratic solidarity over the matter did not last long. They backed down quickly.

While congressional GOP leaders have worked over the past week to highlight solidarity with Trump, broadly, on immigration, they also struck notes of caution about the timing of any significant legislative progress.

McConnell said Friday that talks over funding the wall would “probably” have to wait until after the midterms.

“Probably, and that’s something we do have a disagreement on,” he said in an interview with a Kentucky radio station, referring to the timing of action on Capitol Hill.

Ryan said Thursday that he believed Trump is “willing to be patient to make sure that we get what we need so we can get that done.” The House speaker added that the proposed border wall would eventually be built, calling it “not a question of if, it’s a question of when.”

Congress reached an agreement in March to fund government operations through the end of September, and it must pass new legislation by then or the government will partially shut down Oct. 1, just five weeks before the midterm elections.

The White House’s demands for border funding have ranged widely, from around \$2 billion to \$25 billion, since Trump’s inauguration.

House Republicans are trying to appropriate \$5 billion to begin construction of the wall, a figure Trump has endorsed. Some Senate Democrats have shown a willingness to partially fund construction of the wall in exchange for other immigration policy changes, but those talks have repeatedly broken down.

During the presidential campaign, Trump frequently promised that Mexico would pay for construction of the wall, but the Mexican government has refused to do so. This has led Trump to demand that U.S. taxpayers fund construction of the wall, claiming he would recoup the money from Mexico through other means.

Democrats believe they will make significant gains in the midterms, and any gains could make it more difficult for Trump to secure money for the construction of the wall. Trump’s shutdown threat could be his last ploy to secure border-wall funding before the midterms.

Trump has embraced a big-spending approach to government since taking office, allowing Democrats to secure funding for numerous priorities in order for him to win a bigger military budget. This had helped dramatically expand the budget deficit, leading to complaints from conservatives.

Trump said in March when he signed the last spending bill that he would not allow this to happen again, but Republicans have such a slim majority in the Senate that it makes it impossible to pass spending bills without any support from Democrats.

Trump Threatens U.S. Government Shutdown Over Border Wall

By Doina Chiacu

[Reuters](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Trump Threatens Shutdown Ahead Of Elections

By Brent D. Griffiths
[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump on Sunday threatened to shut down the government this fall if congressional Democrats do not support more funding for a border wall with Mexico and tougher immigration policies.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT!" the president wrote on Twitter.

Government funding is set to run out 37 days before November's midterm elections. Republicans control both houses of Congress and the presidency, meaning voters might well place blame for any shutdown on the GOP. Even without the shutdown, current projections suggest Democrats have a strong chance of flipping the House.

In private conversations with friends and advisers, Trump has sometimes mused that a government shutdown might be politically beneficial for him, arguing it could rally his base. But Republican congressional leaders strongly disagree with that theory, and they've repeatedly warned Trump about the potential negative political consequences of shuttering the government shortly before the midterms.

When asked about the president's statement, Rep. Steve Stivers, the leader of the House Republicans' campaign arm, said he does not think a shutdown will occur.

"I don't think we're going to shut down the government," the Ohio Republican said on ABC's "This Week." "I think we're going to make sure we keep the government open, but we're going to get better policies on immigration."

Trump and Democrats have been locked in a back-and-forth over immigration since the president decided to end an Obama-era program for undocumented immigrants in September 2017. At one time, it appeared that Trump and Democrats would reach a deal to codify the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, in exchange for funding for the border wall and some additional changes to immigration laws. But chances for such an agreement fizzled.

Since then, Democrats have harangued Trump over his administration's policy to separate migrant families at the border and progressive activists have pushed liberal lawmakers to agree to abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, the 2016 Democratic vice presidential nominee, slammed Trump's threat as another musing from "President Shutdown."

"President Shutdown is at it again — how many times will he threaten to shut down the government — putting Virginia's and our nation's economy at risk," Kaine wrote on

Twitter, "as well as the livelihoods of thousands of federal workers — before he realizes this is not a game?"

Trump Again Threatens To Shut Down Government

President insists Congress must provide money for border wall and enact new curbs on immigration

By Siobhan Hughes And Peter Nicholas
[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

G.O.P. Faces Another Midterm Threat As Trumps Plays The Shutdown Card

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg
[New York Times](#), July 29, 2018

Congressional Republicans, already facing a difficult election landscape, confronted a prospect on Sunday they had worked feverishly to avoid: a threat by President Trump to shut down the government over funding for a border wall.

"I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall!" Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter. "Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!"

Last week, Republican leaders thought they had reached a deal with Mr. Trump to delay a confrontation on funding for the wall until after the November midterm elections, according to a person familiar with their discussion.

But Mr. Trump's shutdown threat, in which he also demanded several pieces of a comprehensive immigration overhaul that is stalled in Congress, has opened the door to a politically bruising spending fight as the fiscal year ends in September.

With the election coming just weeks later, the party can ill afford a disruption that voters — already disgusted by Washington dysfunction — may hold the president accountable for.

A shutdown would also distract from Senate Republicans' main business in September: their push to confirm Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

"We're going to have a challenging midterm anyway, and I don't see how putting the attention on shutting down the government when you control the government is going to help you," Representative Tom Cole, Republican of Oklahoma, said in an interview.

Representative Steve Stivers of Ohio, the chairman of the committee charged with electing Republicans to the House, insisted that a shutdown was unlikely.

"I don't think we're going to shut down the government," Mr. Stivers said on the ABC News program "This Week."

"You know, I think we're going to make sure we keep the government open, but we're going to get better policies on immigration."

Democrats and Republicans have in fact made unusual progress on the 12 appropriations measures necessary to keep the government operating. Current funding for the government expires Sept. 30.

Mr. Trump's shutdown threat on Sunday was part of a flurry of tweets in which he attacked favorite targets like the "Robert Mueller Rigged Witch Hunt" ("an illegal Scam!") and the news media ("driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome").

From the very beginning of his term, Mr. Trump has seemed to court a shutdown over the wall, despite the deep objections of much of his staff and Republicans in Congress. Each time congressional leaders have reached a broad bipartisan agreement on spending, he has expressed anger that it does not include money for the wall and threatened to torpedo the deal.

He tweeted in the spring of 2017 that perhaps what the country needed was a "good shutdown" over that issue, among others. The Twitter post set off a scramble at the White House, where the president's aides had been trying to portray a new comprehensive spending deal as a victory.

Then, earlier this year, as Congress approved a catchall spending bill that had no wall funding, Mr. Trump briefly threatened a veto before signing it. But he said he would never sign such an omnibus bill again. His base was enraged at the time, with some core supporters saying Mr. Trump had essentially ceded the midterm elections by failing to insist on the wall funding.

Republican leaders met with the president last week at the White House to talk about funding for the federal government. They emerged thinking they had a deal to delay the wall funding debate, and Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, suggested as much on Friday in a radio interview on WHAS in Louisville.

When asked if the inevitable battle between Republicans and Democrats over the wall would wait until after the midterm elections, Mr. McConnell said, "Probably, and that's something we do have a disagreement on."

Asked if he feared a government shutdown, Mr. McConnell was emphatic. "No, that's not going to happen," he said.

The House speaker, Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin, said Mr. Trump was willing to wait for his wall funding. "As far as the wall is concerned, we've gotten some wall funding already underway," he told reporters on Thursday before the House left for its August recess.

"I think it's not a question of if, it's a question of when," he added. "And the president's willing to be patient to make sure that we get what we need so that we can get that done, because border security's extremely important."

Mr. Trump campaigned on a vow to build a "big, beautiful wall" at the nation's southern border, and 19 months into his presidency, he is clearly frustrated at the lack of movement on his signature issue. Congress passed a measure in March that included \$1.6 billion for more than 90 miles of barriers along the border with Mexico, but that sum is far short of the \$25 billion the president would need to fulfill his campaign promise.

In his tweet on Sunday, Mr. Trump spotlighted Congress's failure to address one of the most intractable issues in Washington: immigration policy. The president has long demanded legislation that would include the White House's "four pillars": a path to citizenship for the young unauthorized immigrants known as Dreamers; an end to the so-called visa lottery, which aims to bring people from underrepresented nations to the United States; deep cuts in legal immigration; and funding for the wall.

Both the House and the Senate rejected immigration bills this year that included the president's four pillars. The Senate measure failed by a wide margin — an outcome that a spokesman for the Democratic leader, Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, recalled on Sunday in an acid response to the president's tweet.

"The bill he's describing only got 39 votes in the Senate floor," said the spokesman, Matt House. "He should learn from his mistakes."

A spokesman for Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the House Democratic leader, was equally caustic. "President Trump should stay on the golf course and stay out of the appropriations process," said the spokesman, Drew Hammill. "Democrats are committed to keeping government open."

Mr. McConnell shares that commitment. He said in the radio interview that the Senate was "on the way to passing at least nine of the 12" spending bills needed to keep the government open, and would probably wrap the remaining measures into a small catchall bill known as a "minibus."

He even gave credit to Mr. Schumer and the Democrats, noting that the two parties "reached an agreement earlier this year about how much we are going to spend, this year and next year, and we're sticking to it and have had a very cooperative period here."

Mr. Ryan said much the same when he addressed reporters on Thursday, noting that unlike in years past, lawmakers have "a very good chance" of getting the majority of their appropriations bills done by the end of September.

"We walked the president through our strategy for appropriations before the fiscal year," Mr. Ryan said. "He agreed with our strategy. So we think we have a unified strategy to make sure that we can get as many appropriation bills done as possible."

Fox News' Pete Hegseth Presses Trump To Threaten Government Shutdown Over Border Wall Funding

By Naomi Lim

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

Fox News co-host Pete Hegseth on Sunday recommended that President Trump renew threats of a shutdown if Congress does not fund his proposed southern border wall in a spending measure is a must-pass by the end of September in order to keep the federal government open.

The comment came shortly before Trump tweeted about being willing to “shut down” to government if his demands regarding border security aren’t met.

“I think the president would be wise to reiterate that he would shut it down if they won’t give a border wall,” Hegseth said during a segment on “Fox and Friends” Sunday.

Hegseth added that Trump had an electoral mandate given it was one of his key campaign promises, as well as leverage due to a series of polls reporting strong approval ratings among his supporters ahead of the 2018 midterm elections.

Trump took to Twitter later Sunday morning to say he “would be willing” to trigger a government shutdown if Democrats did not support legislation for border security, including a wall-like structure along the U.S.-Mexico border.

“Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT!” he wrote. “We need great people coming into our Country!”

I would be willing to “shut down” government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., who chairs the Senate Homeland Security Committee, said during an interview on CBS’ “Face the Nation” that closing the government could hurt Republicans on ballots in November.

“I certainly don’t like playing shutdown politics,” he said. “I don’t think it’d be helpful, so let’s try and avoid it.”

Maxine Waters: Trump Is ‘Bluffing And Bullying’ On Government Shutdown Over Border Wall

By Pam Key

[Breitbart](#), July 29, 2018

Sunday on MSNBC’s “Live,” Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) said President Donald Trump was “bluffing and bullying” with his tweet today threatening a government shutdown if a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border was not funded.

I would be willing to “shut down” government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security,

which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

Waters said, “You know, this president is a bully and he will try to intimidate all of us. He is not going to shut down anything. As a matter of fact, people will remember that he said he was going to build this wall and he was going to make Mexico pay for the wall. They said they weren’t going to pay for anything. Now he wants the American citizens to pay for this wall. American citizens are not going to pay for this wall, he is not going to shut down the government and we are not going to be intimidated by his bluffing and bullying.”

Republicans Weigh Punting Trump Border Wall Fight Until After Midterms

By Jordain Carney

[The Hill](#), July 27, 2018

Congressional Republicans are mulling delaying a fight over funding President Trump’s border wall until after the November midterm elections.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said on Friday that a battle over funding for the controversial U.S.-Mexico border wall would “probably” wait until after the fall elections.

“Probably, and that’s something we do have a disagreement on,” McConnell told a Kentucky radio station when asked if funding for the border wall would wait until after the midterm elections.

McConnell’s comments come after he and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) met with Trump at the White House this week to discuss how to fund the government.

Congress has until Sept. 30 to pass funding legislation and avoid its third shutdown of the year.

But Trump’s demand for border wall funding has loomed over the negotiations for months, and has emerged as a key division between the House and Senate.

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill that would provide \$1.6 billion for border barriers. Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee would give \$5 billion.

Democrats, whose support is needed in the Senate, have dismissed the larger figure as a “non-starter.”

McConnell’s comments on Friday come after Ryan signaled this week that the fight over border wall funding could be pushed until after the Sept. 30 deadline.

“The president’s willing to be patient to make sure that we get what we need so we can that done,” Ryan said, adding that funding the wall was “not a question of if, it’s a question of when.”

Lawmakers have focused on trying to pass smaller appropriations packages this year as they work to avoid

another mammoth omnibus, which would roll the 12 individual spending bills into one piece of legislation.

Trump threatened to veto the March omnibus because it did not include more funding for his proposed border wall.

The administration is demanding a total of \$25 billion for the wall, something Democrats say they will not agree to unless it is paired with an immigration deal.

McConnell said Friday that Congress is on track to pass at least nine of the 12 individual appropriations bills by the end of September.

But that means Congress will need to pass a short-term spending bill, known as a continuing resolution (CR), to fund at least part of the federal government – including the Department of Homeland Security.

“At the end of the [fiscal] year if we can’t reach an agreement on that, we’ll do what’s called a continuing resolution for that little portion of the government,” McConnell said.

Asked about a potential government shutdown, McConnell added: “That’s not going to happen.”

San Diego Pushes Forward With Plans To Make Contractors Disclose Border Wall Affiliation

By Kate Morrissey

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 27, 2018

San Diego City Council will keep moving forward with its plan to require contractors to disclose whether they work on President Trump’s border wall.

At a budget committee meeting this week, council members voted 3 to 1 to have city officials draft an ordinance that would require contractors competing for city projects to disclose any past, present or planned bids, or actual work on parts of the president’s promised border wall.

It was not clear from the decision whether that disclosure might affect a contractor’s ability to get city work or whether the city might publish a list of contractors who have connections to the wall.

“Trump’s border wall does nothing to promote San Diego’s robust economy and our positive international ties with Mexico,” said Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry. “Our region is stronger because of our cross-border exchange with our neighbors to the south.”

Councilman Chris Ward said he knows of at least one company that made a bid on border wall construction that may end up working on a major construction project for the city.

A spokesman for Councilwoman Georgette Gómez, who has led the city’s push against the proposed border wall, said she is happy to see the city moving forward.

Councilman Chris Cate was the lone vote against the move. He called the idea a “bad precedent” meant to shame employers and employees.

“These folks rely on jobs to provide for their families,” Cate said.

During the meeting, the committee reviewed approaches that other cities have taken to show opposition to the promised wall along the southwest border. The report, presented by Jeff Kavar of the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst, was the result of a resolution that the council passed in September.

Kavar said of the six cities with similar resolutions that his office studied, Oakland had the most aggressive rules. That city requires contractors to file a statement that they have not and will not seek work on the border wall.

Los Angeles, he said, requires contractors to explain any affiliation with the wall and keeps those filings as public record.

Other cities are still debating how they will enact such ordinances and whether they should include only work on actual border wall projects, such as the prototypes at Otay Mesa, or also include other fencing replacement work.

Benjamin Prado of the American Friends Service Committee, the only member of the public to address the committee over the border wall issue, urged the city to publish a list of contractors who have border wall affiliations.

Paige Folkman, a deputy city attorney, cautioned the committee that asking companies to disclose information about border wall participation might open the city up to litigation risks. She said the city attorney’s office would have to work closely with other departments to review ordinance plans for legal concerns.

“This is not a slam dunk,” Folkman said.

BORDER SECURITY

See America’s New Ellis Island: A South Texas Bus Terminal

By Manny Fernandez, Mitchell Ferman, Ilana Panich-Linsman, And Sarah Almukhtar

[New York Times](#), July 27, 2018

McALLEN, Tex. — For thousands of undocumented immigrants in South Texas, the crowded bus station in downtown McAllen has become a new, impromptu Ellis Island. They line up daily, newly released from detention, having had no time even to put the laces back on their shoes. They hold government-issued bags with their few belongings close, and their children even closer.

Like Ellis Island, the bus station is a portal — an entry and exit point in the migrants’ monthslong journey to America’s Southwest border and beyond. Yet unlike that historic gateway on New York Harbor, all of the immigrants

passing through the McAllen bus terminal — young or old, healthy or sick — have effectively been jailed by the authorities when they first arrived in the United States.

Today, most of the immigrants arriving at the border have fled their homes in Central America and traveled through Mexico. While some enter the United States in California or Arizona, a majority cross the Rio Grande in Texas, and then either turn themselves in or are caught by Border Patrol agents. They are detained in federal facilities in McAllen and other South Texas cities and then released.

Government-contracted buses drop many of them off at Central Station downtown. They stand in line outside, get their bus tickets inside and then walk to a nearby immigrant-services center run by Catholic Charities. They return later to board buses to cities across the country, where most will join relatives already living in the United States.

The national spotlight has been shining on the hundreds of migrant children who were separated from their relatives as part of the Trump administration's zero-tolerance immigration policy. But thousands of other men, women and children continue to steadily and quietly arrive at America's border.

They continue to come, regardless of politics or policies, or who occupies the White House. They do it, they say, because they want to escape violence, poverty or gangs in their native countries. Most these days are from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, some of the most impoverished and chaotic places in the world.

"In our country, the state of the economy makes it very difficult to live," said one 36-year-old mother of four, who traveled with her children from Olanchito, Honduras, for 33 days and nearly 2,000 miles. "We've seen other cases of people finding success here, so we're trying as well. This is the idea of immigration — come here and make a change for the better, right?"

One day last week, about 125 undocumented immigrants were released from detention and brought to the bus terminal. Four buses dropped them off in groups of roughly 30 from the late morning through the early afternoon. They stood behind a row of tattered traffic cones outside the Central Station's side entrance.

Some gripped blue boxes that the authorities had handed them upon their release — inside were chargers for the GPS monitors they would now have to wear on their ankles. Some did not walk so much as shuffle, because their shoes were missing laces. While in detention, their shoelaces, considered potential weapons, were confiscated and then returned upon their release.

Most of the migrants had been held in custody only a few days, largely because they had no criminal history. The ankle monitors are intended to track their whereabouts and discourage them from escaping as their cases proceed

through the immigration court system. Some have petitioned for asylum, fearing persecution in their native countries.

Rosa Marisol Vielman Marroquin, 31, stepped off the first bus from the detention center with her 11-year-old daughter at 10:50 a.m., the sleek black device on her right ankle locked above her unlaced hiking boots.

She and her daughter had left Petén, Guatemala, 15 days earlier. They were headed to New Jersey, to join her boyfriend there. "I left Guatemala because of the economic situation there, and for fear of the crime," Ms. Vielman said. "I thought that the U.S. was a beautiful place."

Juana Susana Orozco Gomez, 21, stood outside the swinging glass doors of the bus terminal, holding her 3-year-old daughter in her arms. She spoke in a near-whisper as she described their journey from Guatemala, a trek that would be extraordinary were it not so common among those in the line. "We walked over a mountain to cross the border," Ms. Orozco said.

She and the others assembled outside the bus station: alert, nervous, quiet or quietly talking. It was hard to imagine that some had risked their lives to stand there, paying thousands of dollars to the smugglers known as coyotes to guide them, or braving the journey on their own.

Hundreds of bodies have been found in recent years in the desolate South Texas brush north of the bus station — migrants like themselves whose journey had ended in dehydration, heat stroke or hypothermia.

On the fourth and last bus of the day was a 36-year-old woman and her 10-year-old daughter. They had left their native Nicaragua two months prior. "I thought something was going to happen to me on the journey here, but thank God, nothing did," said the woman.

A few standing in line with her spoke of hunger, and of overcoming difficulties they declined to detail. Inside Central Station, his travel to New Jersey finally arranged after talking to the clerks behind the counters, one man who had left Honduras on the Fourth of July stared at the lobby floor, choking back tears when asked about the family he left behind. His 12-year-old son stood silently next to him.

The man, Santiago Antonio Rodriguez Hernandez, couldn't get the words out to explain his emotion. In his hands he clutched, as if they were precious, two items that had been given to him and other migrants on their way to the terminal. They were the first gifts they had received in America: red apples.

They arrived overdressed for Texas in July. Some wore sweatshirts or jackets, or had them draped over their arms or tied around their waists. Many had just been released from a place migrants have named La Hielera — The Cooler, or The Icebox.

That's what they call the Border Patrol's processing center on Ursula Avenue in McAllen, known for its frigid

temperatures. Detainees keep warm with blankets that resemble giant sheets of aluminium foil.

Ms. Vielman, the woman from Petén, Guatemala, was detained there for five days with her 11-year-old daughter, Yerlin. She spoke of the cold, and of being in a separate holding area from her daughter — she could see Yerlin, but only from far away.

“We couldn’t talk to each other except for an hour each day,” Ms. Vielman said. “It was hard, but I told my daughter to be strong and to not cry, and that we were going to be O.K.”

As she spoke, volunteers hovered nearby. All of the immigrants released at the bus station are assisted by Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, which runs an immigrant respite center blocks away. Their volunteers help the migrants get their bus tickets and escort them to the respite center, where they can eat, rest, call relatives and put on new clothes, all without charge.

Without the assistance of Catholic Charities, and the ad-hoc, orderly system they established, the scene in the bus station would be confused and chaotic.

The roughly 125 migrants dropped off at the bus terminal that day were a typical number. Since 2014, the respite center has assisted nearly 100,000 migrants released at the downtown bus station.

Last week, the migrants spoke as much about the future as the past. They were headed across the country to new cities, and all had hearings and appointments scheduled with immigration officials in those cities. Their immigration status, at that moment, was uncertain. But they were eager for whatever was coming next.

“I want to work in Miami,” said Gerardo Mendoza, 27, from Honduras.

“I want to play soccer at school,” said Anthony, 16, from Guatemala.

“This is so beautiful,” said Nelson, 35, from Honduras. “Is all of the United States like this?”

14 People Being Smuggled Into US At Laredo Found In Truck

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

LAREDO, Texas (AP) — A truck driver has been arrested and Homeland Security authorities are investigating after 14 people in the country without legal permission were found hiding in a box truck at a South Texas Border Patrol checkpoint.

Officials say the 13 males and one female were inside moving boxes marked “fragile.” They all were reported in good health.

An initial X-ray of the truck at an inspection checkpoint on Interstate 35 at Laredo detected irregularities that led to a closer examination of the cargo Friday. A dog accompanying agents also alerted officials.

Authorities say all 14 people being smuggled into the U.S. were from Mexico.

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Tiger Cub Abandoned At Texas Border Gets New, Permanent Home

[Associated Press](#), July 27, 2018

WYLIE, Texas (AP) — A live tiger cub that was abandoned in a duffel bag at the U.S. border is settling into his new home in Texas.

Kenobi arrived Thursday night at In-Sync Exotics, an animal sanctuary in Wylie, 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of Dallas.

Border Patrol agents discovered the cub April 30 while patrolling along the Rio Grande near Brownsville. They said three people apparently trying to enter the U.S. illegally just dumped the bag containing the tiger and fled back to Mexico.

Kenobi was initially given a temporary home at the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, but his move to In-Sync Exotics is permanent. The sanctuary says Kenobi will have a playmate in Kylo Ren, a white tiger cub born there in March shortly after the rescue of his parents.

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Border Patrol Shoots Man Accused Of Stealing ATV In San Diego

[Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#), July 29, 2018

A man was shot early Sunday morning after officials say he struck a Border Patrol agent with a rock, knocked the agent off his ATV, and then stole the ATV and tried to flee, according to NBC 7.

About 2:30 a.m., Border Patrol agents encountered the man in an area called Spooner’s Mesa, between the U.S.-Mexico border and Monument Road, according to FOX 5.

San Diego Police Capt. Thomas Underwood told FOX 5 that a fight broke out after the encounter.

Police Lt. Matt Dobbs told City News Service that the man hit an agent with a rock, knocked the agent off his ATV, and then stole the ATV and fled. SIGN UP

Underwood told FOX 5 that agents pursued the the man and at least two Border Patrol agents fired at him during the chase, which ended when the man lost control of the ATV and crashed. The man was shot at least once.

The man, who has not been identified, was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, according to NBC 7. The man is believed to be about 19 years old.

No Border Patrol agents were gravely hurt, according to City News Service.

Homicide detectives from the San Diego Police Department are leading the investigation, since the shooting happened within city limits, City News Service said. The FBI is also investigating the incident, according to NBC 7.

"CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility and U.S. Border Patrol, San Diego Sector is fully cooperating with all investigators," Border Patrol said in a statement to NBC 7.

AVIATION SECURITY

TSA Is Tracking Regular Travelers Like Terrorists In Secret Surveillance Program

By Jana Winter

[Boston Globe](#), July 28, 2018

Federal air marshals have begun following ordinary US citizens not suspected of a crime or on any terrorist watch list and collecting extensive information about their movements and behavior under a new domestic surveillance program that is drawing criticism from within the agency.

The previously undisclosed program, called "Quiet Skies," specifically targets travelers who "are not under investigation by any agency and are not in the Terrorist Screening Data Base," according to a Transportation Security Administration bulletin in March.

The internal bulletin describes the program's goal as thwarting threats to commercial aircraft "posed by unknown or partially known terrorists," and gives the agency broad discretion over which air travelers to focus on and how closely they are tracked.

But some air marshals, in interviews and internal communications shared with the Globe, say the program has them tasked with shadowing travelers who appear to pose no real threat — a businesswoman who happened to have traveled through a Mideast hot spot, in one case; a Southwest Airlines flight attendant, in another; a fellow federal law enforcement officer, in a third.

It is a time-consuming and costly assignment, they say, which saps their ability to do more vital law enforcement work.

TSA officials, in a written statement to the Globe, broadly defended the agency's efforts to deter potential acts of terror. But the agency declined to discuss whether Quiet Skies has intercepted any threats, or even to confirm that the program exists.

Release of such information "would make passengers less safe," spokesman James Gregory said in the statement.

Already under Quiet Skies, thousands of unsuspecting Americans have been subjected to targeted airport and inflight surveillance, carried out by small teams of armed, undercover air marshals, government documents show. The teams document whether passengers fidget, use a computer,

have a "jump" in their Adam's apple or a "cold penetrating stare," among other behaviors, according to the records.

Air marshals note these observations — minute-by-minute — in two separate reports and send this information back to the TSA.

All US citizens who enter the country are automatically screened for inclusion in Quiet Skies — their travel patterns and affiliations are checked and their names run against a terrorist watch list and other databases, according to agency documents.

The program relies on 15 rules to screen passengers, according to a May agency bulletin, and the criteria appear broad: "rules may target" people whose travel patterns or behaviors match those of known or suspected terrorists, or people "possibly affiliated" with someone on a watch list.

The full list of criteria for Quiet Skies screening was unavailable to the Globe, and is a mystery even to the air marshals who field the surveillance requests the program generates. TSA declined to comment.

When someone on the Quiet Skies list is selected for surveillance, a team of air marshals is placed on the person's next flight. The team receives a file containing a photo and basic information — such as date and place of birth — about the target, according to agency documents.

The teams track citizens on domestic flights, to or from dozens of cities big and small — such as Boston and Harrisburg, Pa., Washington, D.C., and Myrtle Beach, S.C. — taking notes on whether travelers use a phone, go to the bathroom, chat with others, or change clothes, according to documents and people within the department.

Air marshals are following citizens to or from cities big and small, including these airports

Quiet Skies represents a major departure for TSA. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the agency has traditionally placed armed air marshals on routes it considered potentially higher risk, or on flights with a passenger on a terrorist watch list. Deploying air marshals to gather intelligence on civilians not on a terrorist watch list is a new assignment, one that some air marshals say goes beyond the mandate of the US Federal Air Marshal Service. Some also worry that such domestic surveillance might be illegal. Between 2,000 and 3,000 men and women, so-called flying FAMs, work the skies.

Since this initiative launched in March, dozens of air marshals have raised concerns about the Quiet Skies program with senior officials and colleagues, sought legal counsel, and expressed misgivings about the surveillance program, according to interviews and documents reviewed by the Globe.

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"What we are doing [in Quiet Skies] is troubling and raising some serious questions as to the validity and legality

of what we are doing and how we are doing it," one air marshal wrote in a text message to colleagues.

The TSA, while declining to discuss details of the Quiet Skies program, did address generally how the agency pursues its work.

"FAMs [federal air marshals] may deploy on flights in furtherance of the TSA mission to ensure the safety and security of passengers, crewmembers, and aircraft throughout the aviation sector," spokesman James Gregory said in an e-mailed statement. "As its assessment capabilities continue to enhance, FAMS leverages multiple internal and external intelligence sources in its deployment strategy."

Agency documents show there are about 40 to 50 Quiet Skies passengers on domestic flights each day. On average, air marshals follow and surveil about 35 of them.

In late May, an air marshal complained to colleagues about having just surveilled a working Southwest Airlines flight attendant as part of a Quiet Skies mission. "Cannot make this up," the air marshal wrote in a message.

One colleague replied: "jeez we need to have an easy way to document this nonsense. Congress needs to know that it's gone from bad to worse."

Experts on civil liberties called the Quiet Skies program worrisome and potentially illegal.

"These revelations raise profound concerns about whether TSA is conducting pervasive surveillance of travelers without any suspicion of actual wrongdoing," said Hugh Handeyside, senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project.

"If TSA is using proxies for race or religion to single out travelers for surveillance, that could violate the travelers' constitutional rights. These concerns are all the more acute because of TSA's track record of using unreliable and unscientific techniques to screen and monitor travelers who have done nothing wrong."

George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley said Quiet Skies touches on several sensitive legal issues and appears to fall into a gray area of privacy law.

If this was about foreign citizens, the government would have considerable power. But if it's US citizens — US citizens don't lose their rights simply because they are in an airplane at 30,000 feet.

— Jonathan Turley, George Washington University law professor

"If this was about foreign citizens, the government would have considerable power. But if it's US citizens — US citizens don't lose their rights simply because they are in an airplane at 30,000 feet," Turley said. "There may be indeed constitutional issues here depending on how restrictive or intrusive these measures are."

Turley, who has testified before Congress on privacy protection, said the issue could trigger a "transformative legal fight."

Geoffrey Stone, a University of Chicago law professor chosen by President Obama in 2013 to help review foreign intelligence surveillance programs, said the program could pass legal muster if the selection criteria are sufficiently broad. But if the program targets by nationality or race, it could violate equal protection rights, Stone said.

Asked about the legal basis for the Quiet Skies program, Gregory, the agency's spokesman, said TSA "maintains a robust engagement with congressional committees to ensure maximum support and awareness" of its effort to keep the aviation sector safe. He declined to comment further.

Beyond the legalities, some air marshals believe Quiet Skies is not a sound use of limited agency resources.

Several air marshals, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly, told the Globe the program wastes taxpayer dollars and makes the country less safe because attention and resources are diverted away from legitimate, potential threats. The US Federal Air Marshal Service, which is part of TSA and falls under the Department of Homeland Security, has a mandate to protect airline passengers and crew against the risk of criminal and terrorist violence.

John Casaretti, president of the Air Marshal Association, said in a statement: "The Air Marshal Association believes that missions based on recognized intelligence, or in support of ongoing federal investigations, is the proper criteria for flight scheduling. Currently the Quiet Skies program does not meet the criteria we find acceptable."

"The American public would be better served if these [air marshals] were instead assigned to airport screening and check in areas so that active shooter events can be swiftly ended, and violations of federal crimes can be properly and consistently addressed."

These revelations raise profound concerns about whether TSA is conducting pervasive surveillance of travelers without any suspicion of actual wrongdoing.

— Hugh Handeyside, American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project

TSA has come under increased scrutiny from Congress since a 2017 Government Accountability Office report raised questions about its management of the Federal Air Marshal Service. Requested by Congress, the report noted that the agency, which spent \$800 million in 2015, has "no information" on its effectiveness in deterring attacks.

Late last year, Representative Jody Hice, a Georgia Republican, introduced a bill that would require the Federal Air Marshal Service to better incorporate risk assessment in its deployment strategy, provide detailed metrics on flight assignments, and report data back to Congress.

Without this information, Congress, TSA, and the Department of Homeland Security "are not able to effectively

conduct oversight” of the air marshals, Hice wrote in a letter to colleagues.

“With threats coming at us left and right, our focus should be on implementing effective, evidence-based means of deterring, detecting, and disrupting plots hatched by our enemies.”

Hice’s bill, the “Strengthening Aviation Security Act of 2017,” passed the House and is awaiting consideration by the full Senate.

Read the bulletin

The Globe, in its review of Quiet Skies, examined numerous TSA internal bulletins, directives, and internal communications, and interviewed more than a dozen people with direct knowledge of the program.

The purpose of Quiet Skies is to decrease threats by “unknown or partially known terrorists; and to identify and provide enhanced screening to higher risk travelers before they board aircraft based on analysis of terrorist travel trends, tradecraft and associations,” according to a TSA internal bulletin.

The criteria for surveillance appear fluid. Internal agency e-mails show some confusion about the program’s parameters and implementation.

A bulletin in May notes that travelers entering the United States may be added to the Quiet Skies watch list if their “international travel patters [sic] or behaviors match the travel routing and tradecraft of known or suspected terrorists” or “are possibly affiliated with Watch Listed suspects.”

Travelers remain on the Quiet Skies watch list “for up to 90 days or three encounters, whichever comes first, after entering the United States,” agency documents show.

Travelers are not notified when they are placed on the watch list or have their activity and behavior monitored.

Quiet Skies surveillance is an expansion of a long-running practice in which federal air marshals are assigned to surveil the subject of an open FBI terrorism investigation.

In such assignments, air marshal reports are relayed back to the FBI or another outside law enforcement agency. In Quiet Skies, these same reports are completed in the same manner but stay within TSA, agency documents show, and details are shared with outside agencies only if air marshals observe “significant derogatory information.”

According to a TSA bulletin, the program may target people who have spent a certain amount of time in one or more specific countries or whose reservation information includes e-mail addresses or phone numbers associated to suspects on a terrorism watch list.

The bulletin does not list the specific countries, but air marshals have been advised in several instances to follow passengers because of past travel to Turkey, according to people with direct knowledge of the program.

One air marshal described an assignment to conduct a Quiet Skies mission on a young executive from a major company.

“Her crime apparently was she flew to Turkey in the past,” the air marshal said, noting that many international companies have executives travel through Turkey.

“According to the government’s own [Department of Justice] standards there is no cause to be conducting these secret missions.”

Jana Winter can be reached at jana.winter@globe.com and on Twitter @JanaWinter. This investigation was made possible through the Spotlight Investigative Journalism Fellowship, a social impact initiative of Participant Media. For more, go to www.spotlightfellowship.com.

Air Marshals Have Conducted Secret In-flight Monitoring Of U.S. Passengers For Years

By Missy Ryan And Ashley Halsey III

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

Federal air marshals have for years been quietly monitoring small numbers of U.S. air passengers and reporting on in-flight behavior considered suspicious, even if those individuals have no known terrorism links, the Transportation Security Administration said on Sunday.

Under a sensitive, previously undisclosed program called “Quiet Skies,” the TSA has since 2010 tasked marshals to identify passengers who raise flags because of travel histories or other factors and conduct secret observations of their actions — including behavior as common as sweating heavily or using the restroom repeatedly — as they fly between U.S. destinations.

The Boston Globe first revealed the existence of the Quiet Skies program on Sunday. In response to questions, TSA spokesman James O. Gregory offered more details of the program’s origins and goals, comparing it to other law enforcement activities that ask officers to closely monitor individuals or areas vulnerable to crime.

“We are no different than the cop on the corner who is placed there because there is an increased possibility that something might happen,” Gregory said. “When you’re in a tube at 30,000 feet . . . it makes sense to put someone there.”

The TSA declined to provide complete information on how individuals are selected for Quiet Skies and how the program works.

According to the TSA, the program uses overseas travel records and other information to identify passengers who will be subject to additional checks at airports and observed in flight by air marshals who report to the agency on their activities.

The initiative raises new questions about the privacy of ordinary Americans as they go about routine travel within the

United States and about the broad net cast by law enforcement as it seeks to keep air travel safe.

Gregory said the program did not single out passengers based on race or religion and should not be considered surveillance because the agency does not, for example, listen to passengers' calls or follow flagged individuals around airports.

But during in-flight observation of people who are tagged as Quiet Skies passengers, marshals use an agency checklist to record passenger behavior: Did he or she sleep during the flight? Did he or she use a cellphone? Look around erratically?

"The program analyzes information on a passenger's travel patterns while taking the whole picture into account," Gregory said, adding "an additional line of defense to aviation security."

"If that person does all that stuff, and the airplane lands safely and they move on, the behavior will be noted, but they will not be approached or apprehended," Gregory said.

He declined to say whether the program has resulted in arrests or disruption of any criminal plots.

Hugh Handeyside, senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union's National Security Project, called on the TSA to provide more information about the program to passengers.

"Such surveillance not only makes no sense, it is a big waste of taxpayer money and raises a number of constitutional questions," he said. "These concerns and the need for transparency are all the more acute because of TSA's track record of using unreliable and unscientific techniques to screen and monitor travelers who have done nothing wrong."

The TSA, which was created soon after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, screens on average more than 2 million passengers a day.

While the agency is tasked with a weighty public safety mission, it has at times been publicly rebuked for being intrusive and abusive at airport checkpoints. It has been accused of doing little to enhance security while subjecting passengers to searches or questioning.

In 2015, the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general found that undercover agents were able to slip fake bombs past TSA screeners about 95 percent of the time. A year later, the flying public was in an uproar over long lines to move through security screening.

But TSA officials have said that ensuring public safety while keeping passengers moving has made their work difficult.

"We have a no-fail mission," former TSA administrator Peter Neffinger told members of Congress in 2015.

The agency has also been criticized for its treatment of Muslims and other minorities who have complained of being profiled while traveling.

Earlier this year, media reports revealed that the agency had compiled a secret list of unruly passengers.

Passengers may be selected for Quiet Skies screening because of their affiliation with someone on the government's no-fly list or other government databases aimed at preventing terrorist attacks.

"This program raises a whole host of civil liberties and profiling concerns," said Faiza Patel, co-director of the New York University School of Law's Brennan Center for Justice.

Critics say that government watch lists and databases are overly broad and include outdated and erroneous information.

The no-fly list, for example, grew from about 16 people in September 2001 to 64,000 people in 2014.

But Patel, an attorney, said that law enforcement officials are generally free to surveil individuals as long as they do not do so based on criteria such as ethnicity.

Quiet Skies: The Government Secretly Monitors US Citizens When They Fly

By Emily Stewart

[Vox](#), July 29, 2018

Are you a United States citizen who caught a flight in the last few months? If so, there's a small chance federal air marshals followed and monitored you, as part of a secret TSA program called "Quiet Skies."

Jana Winter at the Boston Globe on Saturday reported about the previously undisclosed program that specifically targets travelers who "are not under investigation by any agency and are not in the Terrorist Screening Data Base." Winter cites a TSA bulletin from March, which says the goal of the initiative is to thwart threats to commercial flights posed by "unknown or partially known terrorists."

All US citizens who come into the country are automatically screened for potential inclusion in Quiet Skies, and thousands of Americans have reportedly already been subject to surveillance at the airport and on their flights under the program. Travelers stay on the Quiet Skies watch list for up to 90 days or three encounters, and they're never notified they're on the list at all.

It's still unclear what merits being added to the watch list in the first place. The program lays out 15 rules to screen passengers, but the full checklist was not obtained by the Boston Globe and is reportedly a mystery even to the marshals who conduct the surveillance.

Once US citizens are added to the program, marshals flying with them will track a number of behaviors, like whether subjects are "abnormally aware" of their surroundings, whether they display "excessive fidgeting," a "cold penetrating stare," or an "Adam's apple jump," and whether the individual sleeps during a flight.

Revelations about the existence of the Quiet Skies program has spurred questions about the program's legality and what exactly agents are looking for. Per the Globe:

Quiet Skies represents a major departure for TSA. Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the agency has traditionally placed armed air marshals on routes it considered potentially higher risk, or on flights with a passenger on a terrorist watch list. Deploying air marshals to gather intelligence on civilians not on a terrorist watch list is a new assignment, one that some air marshals say goes beyond the mandate of the US Federal Air Marshal Service. Some also worry that such domestic surveillance might be illegal. Between 2,000 and 3,000 men and women, so-called flying FAMs, work the skies.

Some air marshals have complained that they've wound up conducting surveillance on travelers who pose no threat, and others have questioned whether it crosses legal and ethical lines.

And there's also the matter of resources. Quiet Skies, like all government programs, uses government dollars, and some air marshals have questioned whether it's diverting resources from other potential threats. The TSA's budget and effectiveness have long been under scrutiny by lawmakers and the media.

John Casaretti, president of the Air Marshal Association, said in a statement that the Quiet Skies program does not meet the criteria the group finds acceptable.

"The American public would be better served if these [air marshals] were instead assigned to airport screening and check in areas so that active shooter events can be swiftly ended, and violations of federal crimes can be properly and consistently addressed," he said.

TSA Surveilling Ordinary Travelers' Behavior Through Secretive Program: Report

By Brett Samuels

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has begun collecting information on travelers through a program that monitors citizens not on a terror watch list or suspected of a crime, The Boston Globe reported.

The Globe reported Saturday that the program, titled "Quiet Skies," aims to eliminate threats posed by "unknown or partially known terrorists."

Undercover air marshals reportedly document passengers' behavior, including whether they use technology when traveling, whether they change clothes at the airport, how closely they stand to the boarding area and other patterns.

TSA officials told the Globe that the agency works to deter potential terrorist attacks, but declined to address the Quiet Skies program.

Some air marshals told the newspaper that they view the program as a time-consuming and costly effort to track passengers who do not pose a threat.

The Quiet Skies initiative is separate from a TSA directive in May intended to address potential confrontations at airport security screenings.

TSA said it compiled a list of people who act suspiciously or confrontationally around airport checkpoints.

Individuals on the list go through a regular checkpoint screening process, the agency said. Their inclusion provides advance notice to TSA staff that an individual is scheduled to fly out of a particular airport.

A Secret TSA Surveillance Program Targets Ordinary Americans

[Axios](#), July 29, 2018

A secret TSA surveillance program targets ordinary Americans

"Federal air marshals have begun following ordinary US citizens not suspected of a crime or on any terrorist watch list and collecting extensive information about their movements and behavior," reports Jana Winter, a Boston Globe Spotlight fellow.

Why it matters: Some air marshals say it's "a time-consuming and costly assignment...which saps their ability to do more vital law enforcement work."

The details: "The previously undisclosed program, called 'Quiet Skies,' specifically targets travelers who 'are not under investigation by any agency and are not in the Terrorist Screening Data Base,' according to a Transportation Security Administration bulletin in March."

It has drawn criticism from air marshals who have to carry it out.

"[S]ome air marshals, in interviews and internal communications shared with the Globe, say the program has them tasked with shadowing travelers who appear to pose no real threat — a businesswoman who happened to have traveled through [Turkey] ... a Southwest Airlines flight attendant [who was on duty] ... a fellow federal law enforcement officer."

One air marshal messaged another: "jeez we need to have an easy way to document this nonsense. Congress needs to know that it's gone from bad to worse."

'Wait Times Have Normalized' At Twin Cities Airport After TSA Equipment Repaired

By Paul Walsh

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), May 1, 2018

Equipment at three security screening stations in the Twin Cities airport's main terminal was on the fritz for several hours Sunday, backing things up for outbound travelers.

The problem with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) equipment prompted a tweet about 6:30 a.m. from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Shortly before 11:30 a.m., the airport tweeted that the problem has been resolved, and “screening wait times have normalized.”

TSA spokeswoman Michelle Negron said that wait times grew by about 25 to 30 minutes until technicians could fix two of the three lanes.

The one that was still down into the afternoon involves an automated screening lane, “which will take some extra time to fix due to complexity of the system,” Negron said.

Airport officials had urged travelers to arrive at least 2½ hours before flight departure, as opposed to the typical 2-hour recommendation.

Lines at the south security checkpoint were unusually long soon after the equipment failure, said airport spokeswoman Melissa Scovronski.

TSA officials called in personnel to diagnose and fix the problem.

“I saw a picture on Twitter,” Scovronski said before the repairs were made. “It doesn’t look pretty.”

The main terminal has two TSA checkpoints. The south location has six lines, and the north checkpoint has a capacity for 10.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Trump: People Crossing Border Use Children For ‘Sinister Purposes’

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump said Sunday that many immigrants crossing the border are using children for “their own sinister purposes,” calling on Congress to change immigration laws.

The president also told voters to “Vote R,” suggesting that electing more Republicans to Congress after the midterm elections in November would ensure immigration laws being fixed.

Under prior immigration policy, those who cross the border illegally with children were released while they waited for deportation hearings.

“Please understand, there are consequences when people cross our Border illegally, whether they have children or not — and many are just using children for their own sinister purposes. Congress must act on fixing the DUMBEST & WORST immigration laws anywhere in the world! Vote ‘R,’” Mr. Trump tweeted Sunday.

His tweet comes after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Kentucky Republican, told 840 WHAS Radio that funding for Mr. Trump’s border wall would likely come after the midterms.

But Mr. Trump said he’s willing to go as far as a government shutdown if border security isn’t included in Congress’ spending bill.

“I would be willing to “shut down” government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!” he tweeted.

The president also retweeted two of his own tweets from July 27, in which he called Democrats “incompetent” and said they want open borders and crime.

“The only things the Democrats do well is ‘Resist,’ which is their campaign slogan, and ‘Obstruct.’ Cryin’ Chuck Schumer has almost 400 great American people that are waiting ‘forever’ to serve our Country! A total disgrace. Mitch M should not let them go home until all approved!” read one of the president’s retweets.

Mr. McConnell announced last month he will cancel the Senate’s August recess. Senators will spend the first week of August at home in their districts but will be in session the rest of the month.

Massive Court Filing Says Illegal Immigrant Families Suffered From U.S. Food, Chill, Disease

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

Illegal immigrant families are furious at the treatment they received after being detained at the border, complaining of bad burritos, cold soups, being forced to drink water out of toilets and contagious disease outbreaks that have swept through the facilities.

The complaints are detailed in a massive court filing on behalf of illegal immigrant children that claims the government is breaking its promise to provide quality care for juveniles who end up in the custody of the Homeland Security Department.

“We had to drink the water from the toilet to keep hydrated,” said one mother, identified only by her first name, Yojana, who was nabbed in Texas.

Several parents said their children contracted chickenpox from others in detention, the chill of the facilities was a universal complaint, and a number of families objected to the food situation.

“We received soup when we arrived, but it was cold,” complained two brothers who were nabbed in Arizona.

“They feed us two burritos per day, but it isn’t enough,” said one mother, identified only by her first name, Denia, who is still breastfeeding her young daughter. “I have an allergy to gluten, so I’m afraid to eat the burrito because it might make me sick.”

She went on to say that the conditions are causing her breast milk to dry up, leaving her daughter hungry as well.

The reports stem from the first stage of immigration detention, when migrants are nabbed immediately after crossing into the U.S.

Migrants are supposed to be processed and then either immediately returned home if possible, or else released into the interior of the U.S., put into longer-term detention by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or, in the case of juveniles, turned over to social workers at the Health and Human Services Department.

But in the first hours or days after they are caught, the migrants are still in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the families say that is where the treatment is its worst.

A number of parents said in court documents that guards yelled at both them and their children, made fun of their home countries and threatened to deport them. Children, meanwhile, reported that guards would kick them to prevent them from sleeping.

"They made us wake up three times in the night to make us line up and go through a list. In the middle of the night, they would kick us to wake us up," one detainee, identified only as Leydi, said in her sworn declaration. "There were women who asked the officials not to be rude, but the officials said that it wasn't their problem. The only thing the officials said was that it wasn't their fault that we came to this country illegally.

The government disputes the accounts, pointing to its own inspectors, who say conditions are up to standards.

One of those inspectors visited a half-dozen Border Patrol stations and found everything in order: toilets and sinks worked, plenty of food was available, the facilities were regularly cleaned, and water, juice and baby formula were available. The monitor said the children he spoke with had been able to talk to their parents and were in touch with consular officials from their home countries.

Henry A. Moak Jr., the chief accountability officer for CBP, said migrants who complained about the water appeared not to know how to use a water fountain. Those who complained about the food said it was different from what they were used to, but he never heard reports of rotten or spoiled food.

In the case of those who complained about the temperature, "many of the minors and or parents I spoke to were not used to air conditioning," Mr. Moak concluded.

A federal judge, fed up with the bickering and unsure which side to believe, late last week stepped in and said she would order an independent monitor to review the border facilities and report back to her.

"It seems like there continue to be persistent problems," Judge Dolly M. Gee said. "I need to appoint an independent

monitor to give me an objective viewpoint about what is going on at the facilities."

Judge Gee's case, known in legal circles as the Flores settlement, has been going on for years. It's separate from, but in many ways is responsible for initiating, the recent border separations that have sparked their own legal battle.

The 1997 Flores agreement controls the way illegal immigrant juveniles are treated in immigration custody. For nearly two decades, it was deemed to apply only to children who jumped the border without a parent or guardian, but Judge Gee ruled in 2015 that it would, for the first time, also cover children who arrived with parents.

Her ruling meant the juveniles had to be quickly released — and since they were supposed to be released to their parents, that meant releasing the families.

Both the Obama and Trump administrations say that ruling sparked a surge of illegal immigrant families — and even abductions of young children so illegal immigrant adults could pretend to be families — hoping to take advantage of the policy and earn a speedy release into the U.S., where they could disappear into the shadows.

Despite the surge that followed her ruling, Judge Gee has rejected the suggestion that she is responsible.

She has inserted herself ever deeper into the decision-making on detention, regularly overruling the government to set standards for care and conditions for quick release.

CBP declined to comment on the complaints, citing the ongoing litigation.

But Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, speaking at the Bipartisan Policy Center last week, acknowledged there have been struggles. He said most of the facilities were designed decades ago, when almost all of the illegal immigrants crossing the border were adult men from Mexico.

They were usually kept in custody for hours — long enough to be processed — then quickly returned to Mexico without a formal deportation. It was so quick that Border Patrol agents said it wasn't uncommon to catch the same guy twice in a nighttime shift.

Beginning late in the Bush administration, the government began to move away from returns and toward removals, or a formal deportation, that required a longer process in the U.S.

But the bigger change was in the flow of people. More than 50 percent of the flow of illegal immigrants across the southwestern border now are from Central America and other non-Mexican nations — and a huge percentage of them are either families or juveniles traveling solo.

Processing takes much longer, particularly with myriad levels of protection built into the system for refugees and others fleeing real dangers. Holding families for several days is a far bigger challenge than holding Mexican men for a few hours.

"We have to have a better arrival point for children and families," Mr. McAleenan conceded at the Bipartisan Policy Center.

'Deleted' Families: What Went Wrong With Trump's Family-Separation Effort

By Nick Miroff, Amy Goldstein And Maria Sacchetti
[Washington Post](#), July 28, 2018

When a federal judge ordered the Trump administration to reunify migrant families separated at the border, the government's cleanup crews faced an immediate problem.

They weren't sure who the families were, let alone what to call them.

Customs and Border Protection databases had categories for "family units," and "unaccompanied alien children" who arrive without parents. They did not have a distinct classification for more than 2,600 children who had been taken from their families and placed in government shelters.

So agents came up with a new term: "deleted family units."

But when they sent that information to the refugee office at the Department of Health and Human Services, which was told to facilitate the reunifications, the office's database did not have a column for families with that designation.

The crucial tool for fixing the problem was crippled. Caseworkers and government health officials had to sift by hand through the files of all the nearly 12,000 migrant children in HHS custody to figure out which ones had arrived with parents, where the adults were jailed and how to put the families back together.

Compounding failures to record, classify and keep track of migrant parents and children pulled apart by President Trump's "zero tolerance" border crackdown were at the core of what is now widely regarded as one of the biggest debacles of his presidency. The rapid implementation and sudden reversal of the policy whiplashed multiple federal agencies, forcing the activation of an HHS command center ordinarily used to handle hurricanes and other catastrophes.

After his 30-day deadline to reunite the "deleted" families passed Thursday, U.S. District Judge Dana M. Sabraw lambasted the government for its lack of preparation and coordination.

"There were three agencies, and each was like its own stovepipe. Each had its own boss, and they did not communicate," Sabraw said Friday at a court hearing in San Diego. "What was lost in the process was the family. The parents didn't know where the children were, and the children didn't know where the parents were. And the government didn't know either."

This account of the separation plan's implementation and sudden demise is based on court records as well as

interviews with more than 20 current and former government officials, advocates and contractors, many of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to give candid views and diagnose mistakes.

Trump officials have insisted that they were not doing anything extraordinary and were simply upholding the law. The administration saw the separations as a powerful tool to deter illegal border crossings and did not anticipate the raw emotional backlash from separating thousands of families to prosecute the parents for crossing the border illegally.

Most of those parents were charged with misdemeanors and taken to federal courthouses for mass trials, where they were sentenced to time served. By then, their children were already in government shelters. The government did not view the families as a discrete group or devise a special plan to reunite them, until Sabraw ordered that it be done.

One result was that more than 400 parents were deported without their children. Many other parents say they went weeks without being able to speak to their children and, in dozens of cases, signed forms waiving their right to reclaim their children without understanding what those forms said.

Scrambling to meet the judge's reunification deadline, government chaperons transported children from shelters scattered across the country to immigration jails near the border where they had been severed from their parents weeks or months before.

One attorney said Friday that 10 days had passed since her client was told she would be reunited with her 6-year-old daughter. She remained in detention in Texas, and neither she nor a social worker for her daughter, waiting in a New York shelter, could get an explanation. "She watched all the other mothers go out of her dorm. There is only her and one other left," said the attorney, Eileen Blessinger.

In court filings Thursday, the government said it had reunited more than 1,800 children with their parents or other guardians. But 711 children would remain separated for now, because their parents had been deported, had criminal records or otherwise had not been cleared to regain custody.

In the end, Trump's decision to stop separating families, followed by Sabraw's reunification order, has largely brought a return to the status quo at the border, with hundreds of adult migrants released from custody to await immigration hearings while living with their children in the United States.

"If you're really, really pathetically weak, the country is going to be overrun with millions of people. And if you're strong, then you don't have any heart," Trump griped before his June 20 executive order, calling the situation "a tough dilemma."

Senior administration officials said they made efforts to note which families had been broken up and that they thought the HHS system already in place would have allowed parents

to recover their children and leave the country together by agreeing to voluntary deportation.

"There was always an intent for reunification to occur. It wasn't meant to be a permanent condition," one official said.

Sabraw, who was appointed to the federal bench by President George W. Bush, said even a short-term split was unacceptable.

"It is the act of separation from a parent, particularly with young children, that matters," he told the government in court proceedings.

'A huge blowback'

When illegal crossings along the Mexico border jumped this spring to their highest levels since Trump took office, the president fumed, reportedly telling aides, "This can't happen on my watch." He singled out Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen for blame.

Family units consisting of at least one parent and one child were a growing share of those coming across, typically to turn themselves in and claim asylum, citing drug violence and gang threats in Central America. Border Patrol officials called them "non-impactables," meaning that the adults knew that arriving with children would probably result in their being released from detention to await immigration hearings that could be months or years away.

Agents in the field had long clamored for a way to deter those border crossers, believing that some are human smugglers and that allowing them to go unpunished invites more lawbreaking. By this spring, according to DHS, a quarter of all illegal border crossers were family groups.

"We truly felt this was something we had to do," a senior DHS official said. "Enforcing the law for the right reasons is not a bad decision."

Suddenly, an idea considered too extreme by the Obama administration was back in play, pushed by powerful supporters, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller and White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly.

But there were also top officials at DHS and other agencies who warned that it could go disastrously wrong.

"Some of us didn't think it would be good policy. Not because it wouldn't be effective, but because it doesn't reflect American values and because it would bring a huge blowback," said James D. Nealon, a former DHS international policy adviser who resigned in February.

The government previously had separated parents on a more limited basis, such as when human trafficking was suspected or the adult's relationship to the child was in doubt.

Last year, with no public announcement, the administration piloted a mass-separation system in the El Paso area. When illegal crossings jumped this spring, Trump signed off on a blanket policy for the whole border.

"If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you, and that child will be separated from you as required by

law," Sessions said in a May 7 speech in Arizona. "If you don't like that, then don't smuggle children over our border."

One senior Border Patrol official said agents were quietly directed not to refer parents of children under 5 for criminal prosecution. But 27 toddlers and preschoolers were separated between the start of "zero tolerance" on May 5 and Trump's executive order ending separations on June 20. Dozens more had been taken from their parents in previous weeks.

As the system ramped up, thousands of children were funneled into shelters overseen by HHS, so many that the agency had to set up a tent camp outside El Paso and plan for additional ones on military bases.

"I think CBP and ICE would have preferred a plan that was more incremental, starting in certain locations, or with specific groups," said Stewart Verdery, assistant homeland security secretary under Bush, referring to Customs and Border Protection, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "Something that could be done in a ratcheted way, so you could know exactly where people were physically and with respect to litigation status."

On June 28, two days after Sabraw's reunification order, DHS officials held a conference call for members of the DHS's Homeland Security Advisory Council, a group of security experts and former officials who provide recommendations and counsel to the secretary. One member, David A. Martin, said officials had few answers when dismayed members asked how they planned to bring families back together: "They were saying, 'Well, we're working on it.'" Two weeks later, he and three other members quit the panel in disgust.

In his resignation letter, Martin said the family separations were "executed with astounding casualness about precise tracking of family relationships — as though eventual reunification was deemed unlikely or at least unimportant."

Another member who resigned, Elizabeth Holtzman, said the failure to create records to track parents and children demonstrated "utter depravity."

"This is child kidnapping, plain and simple," she wrote in her resignation letter, urging Nielsen to quit.

Top officials thought that any controversy generated by the family separations could be parlayed into leverage for negotiations with Democrats over the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and border wall funding, according to current and former DHS officials involved in planning the policy.

Instead, the firestorm has "poisoned the well," leaving the chances of congressional action even more remote, said Verdery, who now runs a lobbying firm. "If you're a Democrat or a moderate and a proposal is pigeonholed as DHS 'breaking up families,' it's going to be a nonstarter."

Broken systems

Well before Trump took office, people inside and outside HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement recognized that the custom-built database used since 2014 to track the migrant children in its custody was clunky and flawed.

The Unaccompanied Children Portal crashed often, according to several people with access to it. And because it sometimes failed to save information, caseworkers were trained to copy whatever information they were trying to enter about a child into a separate Word document.

Most serious, the portal was not built in a way that allowed ORR to add data categories or quickly sort the information it contains, according to three people familiar with it. If HHS staff wanted to compile specific information, such as a roster of all the pregnant teenagers at shelters, "It would be months and months," said a former HHS official.

Because the system was not designed with an expectation that ORR would need to find the detained parents of its children, the portal did not include a column to type in information about parents' identities, locations or file numbers.

A 2015 Government Accountability Office report concluded that "the interagency process to refer and transfer [unaccompanied children] from DHS to HHS is inefficient and vulnerable to errors because it relies on e-mails and manual data entry, and documented standard procedures, including defined roles and responsibilities, do not exist."

By 2016, the former HHS official said, then-HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell "was frustrated, because a lot of times, we just had to say, 'We can't get this data,' or 'We can get it, but it will take a couple of weeks.'"

The department hired a contractor who made recommendations for upgrading the system and adding more staff. A few improvements were made, but it was near the end of the Obama administration, and the old guard ran out of time. "We left a blueprint for the new administration to pick up," the former official said. "To my knowledge, nothing happened."

Just before Trump was sworn in, three immigrant advocacy groups issued a report lamenting what they said was a steady increase in the number of families being separated at the border. The report warned that "government agencies have little policy guidance on family unity and separation, and no consistent or comprehensive mechanisms to document family status or trace family members."

After the new administration took over, "We were begging them to start counting those numbers" of separated children, said Michelle Brane, director of the Women's Refugee Commission's migrant rights and justice program, one of the groups that authored the report. "They insisted they don't have a way to do that."

An HHS spokesman said a "data element" was added to the system about two weeks ago to make clear whether a child was separated from a parent or guardian during

apprehension. The system now had the capacity to generate reports, as well as to upload Word documents and spreadsheets, the spokesman said.

Flip-flopped standards

HHS officials said they participated in White House calls and meetings after "zero tolerance" was announced, but they did not address repeated questions about whether the department was involved in planning the policy.

The department's refu-gee office was overwhelmed with the number of children in its custody once the mass separations began. And the files arriving from the Border Patrol were a mess.

In some cases, Border Patrol agents had handwritten parents' names and alien numbers in children's files that were sent on to ORR. But it was hit-or-miss, according to several children's advocates familiar with the records. One HHS official said that files he reviewed typically contained parents' names but did not say where the parents were.

The underlying problem, though, was that the problem-ridden database "was not set up to reunite children [with] parents from whom they'd been separated," said Robert Carey, who was director of ORR for the final two years of the Obama administration.

As one senior DHS official put it: "We had a system that was designed to flow one way."

Four days before Sabraw's reunification order, HHS Secretary Alex Azar pulled responsibility for returning children to their parents away from ORR and placed it in the hands of emergency responders.

Today, Justice Department officials insist that "zero tolerance" remains in force. The agency "continues to prosecute, to the extent practicable, all cases referred to them for prosecution," said spokesman Devin O'Malley.

Though illegal crossings typically decline during summer, DHS officials point to a drop in arrests along the border last month as proof the family separation system was working before the president halted it.

"Many of the facts around the enforcement efforts were lost in the media and congressional hysteria, misreporting, dishonest assertions and outright lies about the efforts of the administration," one senior administration official vented. "The facts and rule of law lost out to emotional claims."

Border Patrol officials privately predict that smugglers will be emboldened by flip-flopping enforcement standards and say they are bracing for the number of crossings to rise. With families once more largely exempted from detention, agents have grudgingly reverted to the "catch and release" system that Trump promised to end.

"We missed out on an opportunity to educate the public about the reality of the border," said a Border Patrol official who shared criticism of the White House on the condition of anonymity. "You have to think everything through before you

move on something like this, and when the pushback hits, you have to weather the storm.”

The American Civil Liberties Union, which brought the lawsuit that led to Sabraw’s order, said it could take months to track down hundreds of deported parents and make arrangements to return their children. Some parents may be hard to reach or hiding from the very threats that prompted them to flee their countries in the first place.

In the meantime, the government will try to place their children with vetted guardians. Otherwise, they will remain in shelters.

“It’s going to be really hard detective work,” said Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU’s Immigrants Rights Project. “Hopefully we will find them.”

Immigrant Girl Hides In Auto Shop After Escaping Attendants From Florida Detention Facility

By Lori Rozsa

[Washington Post](#), July 28, 2018

The 15-year-old Honduran girl couldn’t take it anymore. She had been held in the Florida detention facility for three weeks, and it felt like a prison.

So when she saw an opportunity to escape during a trip to the doctor’s office, she ran.

That’s when Frank Gonzalez saw her.

“She came running in from the streets,” said the owner of Gonzalez Auto Center in Homestead, Fla. “She was crying.”

The girl ran into his shop and hid in a corner behind a large shelf full of tools. It was a busy morning at the large auto shop that operates 14 bays. But she stayed there, crying, for more than an hour on Friday morning, refusing to move.

“We were giving her water and some food, but she stayed in that corner the whole time,” said Elvis Lopez, a mechanic at the shop. “She seemed pretty scared. She kept saying she didn’t want to go back.”

Nobody knew what to do with the frightened teen, who was being held at the Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Children, about five miles from the auto shop. The Homestead shelter houses an estimated 1,200 immigrant youths, making it the second-largest detention center for migrant children in the country.

The South Florida facility, near the Homestead Air Reserve Base, has been a target of protests over the Trump administration’s zero-tolerance policy for illegal immigration at the southern U.S. border, which led to the separation of at least 2,500 children from their parents. The detention center also houses children who arrived at the border without parents.

Police did not release the name of the girl who fled.

“They were transporting the child to an eye exam, and when they opened the door and started walking in, she just took off on them,” Homestead police spokesman Fernando Morales said. The eye doctor’s office is near the auto shop, he noted, and just a quarter mile from the police department.

While others got back to work at the auto shop, Lopez called his sister and asked her to talk to the girl to try to calm her down.

His sister, Bertha Lopez, said the girl was distraught.

“She was very afraid. She said she was from Honduras, and she has no family,” Bertha Lopez said. “I told her she would be safe, and we would try to help her.”

Bertha Lopez called Nora Sandigo, head of a local nonprofit organization that helps immigrant families navigate the legal system. Lopez told the girl that they would get her a lawyer if she needed one. But the girl was inconsolable.

“She didn’t feel confident that anybody could help,” Lopez said.

Before Sandigo could get there, police vans began circling the shop’s parking lot. Gonzalez said nobody from the shop called the police, but he eventually flagged down an officer and pointed to where the girl had hidden.

“It broke my heart to see the girl panicked and scared, not knowing where her father or mother was,” Gonzalez said.

Lopez, who was still on the phone with her brother when the police arrived, said she heard the commotion in the background.

“I could hear her screaming and crying and begging not to go back,” Lopez said.

Gonzalez said the Homestead police spoke to the girl in Spanish and treated her girl gently, but she was afraid.

“She said, ‘Please don’t punish me, don’t touch me, don’t hold my hand,’” he said. “They put handcuffs on her, but not like a criminal, like a human being.”

Police say the girl was returned to the detention center without incident.

Sandigo, the immigrant advocate, arrived at the auto shop soon after the girl was recaptured and said she called 911 to try to talk to somebody and let them know she could help.

“She was desperate to be safe, but she didn’t want to go back to that place,” Sandigo said. “She said she wanted her freedom, and her family. She has nobody here.”

Mark Weber, deputy assistant secretary for public affairs for human services at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the custody of unaccompanied minors, said he couldn’t comment on the escape. According to HHS, between October and May, 109 children left detention centers “without permission.” The department says “most or all” returned to detention.

Gonzalez said he’s glad he told the officers where to find the girl.

"They were going around and around, they knew she was close by," he said. "It's safer for her in detention than out on the streets with no family. It was a hard decision."

Gonzalez, who came to the United States from Cuba in 1971 with his family, said he supports the Trump administration's tough stance on border security but disagrees with separating families.

"People who want to come here, and work for the American Dream, they should get papers and follow the rules," Gonzalez said. "But it breaks my heart to see mothers and fathers divided from their children. Families should be together all the time."

Still, he says he supports Trump's general immigration policy, adding, "Let's make America great again."

Trump: Leading Dems Have Called For ICE's Abolition, My Administration Has ICE's Back 100%

By Ian Hanchett
[Breitbart](#), July 28, 2018

During Friday's Weekly Address, President Trump said, "leading Democrat politicians have called to abolish ICE" and that his administration completely has ICE's back.

Transcript (via FedNews) as Follows:

"On September 11th, 2001, America suffered the worst terrorist attacks in our history. The attacks were carried out by foreign nationals who exploited our lax immigration laws and defrauded our immigration system in order to murder nearly 3,000 innocent people.

Following the attacks, Congress placed most immigration enforcement functions within a new agency known as the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, meaning ICE.

One of the critical lessons of 9/11 is that immigration enforcement saves lives. We must enforce the rules against visa fraud, illegal overstay, illegal entry, and other immigration violations and crimes; and crimes they are – believe me, crimes they are. These are the practices exploited by terrorists, drug dealers, child smugglers, human traffickers, gang members – and countless unknown and unregistered criminals – to gain illicit access to our country and threaten our citizens.

In fiscal year 2017 alone, ICE arrested more than 127,000 aliens charged or convicted of crimes inside of the United States. These were very serious crimes and far too many of them.

Yet, leading Democrat politicians have called to abolish ICE – nobody even believes it, they want to abolish ICE – in other words, they want open borders and more crime. And that's what you're going to get. You'll get more crime as you open up those borders.

Last week, 167 Democrats in the House of Representatives refused to vote for a resolution to support the heroes of ICE. These are brave and great men and women. They're in the trenches every day taking the fight straight to vicious gangs. They prey on our people, they hurt our people, they kill our people.

Without the brave heroes of ICE, we would have no enforcement, no laws, no borders and therefore – we wouldn't even have a country.

So to the courageous public servants at ICE – men and women, great ones: we want you to know that the American people are with you and my Administration has your back 100 percent.

You are the heroes who protect the lives of our citizens, the safety of our communities, and the sovereignty of our great nation.

We love you. We support you. And we always will stand with you.

Thank you. And God Bless America."

Follow Ian Hanchett on Twitter @IanHanchett

Potential Dark Horse 2020 Dem: 'I Don't Think Abolishing ICE Is A Good Idea'

By Max Greenwood
[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu (D) distanced himself on Sunday from calls by some other Democrats to abolish U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), saying that doing so is not "a good idea."

"I don't think abolishing ICE is a good idea, primarily because when police departments get out of the way, do the wrong thing or are governed in the wrong way, you don't say get rid of the police department," Landrieu said on CNN's "State of the Union." "You reform the police department."

The former mayor of New Orleans Mitch Landrieu says he is a "radical centrist": "I don't think abolishing ICE is a good idea" #CNNSOTU <https://t.co/dbRRbpxmH0>— CNN Politics (@CNNPolitics) July 29, 2018

Landrieu said the U.S. is a "nation of immigrants" but also a "nation of laws," adding that Congress has been "remiss" not to pursue comprehensive immigration reform.

"I do think that Congress has been remiss in not passing comprehensive immigration reform," he said. "But it does have to be common sense, it has to be thoughtful and it has to protect the border, while at the same time making sure that everybody is dealt with in a constitutional way."

Landrieu, who has been mentioned as a potential dark horse candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, told host Jake Tapper that he doesn't "intend to run" in 2020.

A number of Democrats, primarily in the party's progressive wing, have called in recent weeks to do away

with ICE, arguing that the agency has failed to serve the purpose for which it was established.

The demands to abolish the agency arose amid intense public scrutiny of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy, which prioritizes prosecutions of people who cross into the U.S. illegally.

That policy led to thousands of migrant children being separated from their parents at the southern border before, bowing to intense bipartisan backlash, President Trump signed an executive order reversing his administration's policy.

The government has sought in recent weeks to reunify families in response to a court-ordered mandate to do so.

While the government said Friday that more than 1,800 children had been reunited with their parents, it said that hundreds more were deemed "ineligible" for family reunification.

— This report was updated at 1:30 p.m.

How Twitter Vaulted 'Abolish ICE' Into The Mainstream

By Ali Breland

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

Calls to "Abolish ICE" began as an obscure Twitter hashtag created by liberal activists. It's now a movement supported by prominent progressive leaders and candidates in races across the country and the center of a heated debate in Democratic circles.

The viral campaign pushing for the elimination of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency is the latest example of how Twitter has become a tool for groups outside the mainstream to get their ideas in front of power brokers.

Writer and activist Sean McElwee, who is credited with creating the #AbolishICE hashtag, told The Hill that Twitter's platform and its reach created a unique opportunity to spread the idea.

"It is generally true that having a strong presence on Twitter will give it legs in the real world because people who influence real-world stuff are on Twitter," he said.

McElwee first tweeted it in February 2017 and kept advocating ending the agency to his over 70,000 followers.

The hashtag eventually caught on in far-left Twitter circles in memes, with Twitter users incorporating "Abolish ICE" into their display names and in other ways.

Social media watchers say the first breakthrough was when a prominent Democratic candidate, Randy Bryce, who is running for the seat held by outgoing Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), offered his support for abolishing ICE in April of 2018.

Ana Maria Archilla, the co-executive director of Center for Popular Democracy, said that at first progressives "were worried about the political implications."

But "when Randy could say it in rural Wisconsin, in Paul Ryan territory," she continued, activists felt they had made a breakthrough.

Bryce said the position always made sense to him after seeing what rural migrant workers in his state dealt with from the agency.

"Even before I started running for office it was something that I had noticed in the immigrant community — that people had this really negative image of ICE," he told The Hill.

The biggest moment for the Abolish ICE movement though came after Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a self-described democratic socialist, upset Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.), in a primary. As she leapt into the spotlight, she brought the calls to abolish ICE into the national debate.

Within days of her victory, abolishing ICE had become a litmus test for Democrats running in the midterms and for those seen as potential 2020 presidential contenders.

For all the success #AbolishICE enjoyed on social media, McElwee said that equally crucial were organizing efforts by activists.

"If you came up with a new phrase like 'Let dolphins vote' and a million people supported it, there wouldn't be an intellectual case for it and an organizing apparatus behind it," he explained.

"The reason people could say 'Abolish ICE' and it hit the ground running is because it was already resting on a ton of intellectual work and organizing and movement building that had already been going on," Archilla told The Hill. "The demand is as old as ICE."

She said immigration groups had long been frustrated with ICE. But in the Obama years, mainstream immigration groups shied away from calls to abolish any agencies, instead believing that they would be able to push immigration reform through Congress.

"We thought legalization was in our reach. We thought we could win it under Bush, then under Obama, then we realized we couldn't because of the realities of Congress," Archilla said. "Then we came to see that we should go after the rules around migration and enforcement."

Archilla said that groups assumed it would take a long time before their position became politically acceptable.

But then surprisingly the #AbolishICE hashtag went viral on Twitter, boosted in part by the Trump administration's controversial zero-tolerance policy that led to migrant children being separated from parents caught crossing the southern border.

That policy sparked a firestorm with the administration receiving criticism from lawmakers in both parties. Democratic lawmakers also began rallying behind the idea of abolishing ICE.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), a potential 2020 contender, became the first senator to call for scrapping the

agency. Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) even introduced legislation in Congress to eliminate the agency.

The hashtag also gave the public a way to easily weigh in on the issue.

"It was in the context of Trump and the escalation of attacks on immigrants ... he lifted the veil," Archila said. "When people saw that and were confronted with the reality of immigrants — people see that and said 'that can't possibly be who we are.' It was in that context that [demands to] Abolish ICE ... became the most succinct way of saying, 'we do not want our country to be that.'"

Garrett Broad, a professor at Fordham University who has researched social media and activist movements, said that Abolish ICE's efforts come from a tried and true activist playbook.

"This is a strategy in social movements where you play the flank," Broad said.

"If you look at the history there is always the side that is pushing for more extreme and radical policies."

Activists, though, can now speed up that process, thanks to social media, in particular Twitter.

McElwee appears to be well aware of this — his previous Twitter display name was "Overton Window mover," a term that describes how to change the boundaries of what is considered acceptable mainstream political discourse.

Broad said that unlike prior fringe ideas, Twitter supercharged the pace at which a trendy leftist hashtag could drive the national political discussion.

But Democratic leaders were always wary of the idea, especially in a midterm year. And many prominent Dems worried that the calls to abolish ICE diverted attention from what they saw as the real issue: Changing the country's immigration laws.

Republicans also saw political advantage in the debate over ICE. Trump slammed Democrats for calls to abolish ICE earlier this month, saying they were "demeaning" the agency's workers and citing the threat from gangs such as MS-13.

House GOP leaders also pushed ahead with a vote on a measure offering support for ICE in hopes of publicly stoking Dem divisions. That measure passed the House earlier this month in a 244-35. Eighteen Democrats voted to back ICE and 34 opposed the resolution, which for procedural reasons needed two-thirds to pass.

Some advocates say that the effort to abolish ICE has lost some momentum. They say there are limits to how quickly they can change the national discourse even with a social media wave.

"In some ways what the phrase 'abolish ICE' fails to do is to make that bigger connection," said Silky Shah, executive director of the Detention Watch network, a pro-immigrant rights group, which backs scraping the agency.

Shah likened "Abolish ICE" to another hashtag turned rallying cry, "Black Lives Matter."

"Black Lives Matter is saying, 'it's important we as a movement are fighting for black lives.' I could see connections but in ways, the phrase 'abolish ICE' alone isn't enough," she said.

McElwee, though, said there had been important gains in the fight against ICE and its policies. He likened what the left had done to ICE with how Republicans were able to direct conservative ire at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

"That was a very concrete win for the Republican party. By making Republicans hate the IRS, it makes it very hard for it to do its job," he said.

He noted that approval of ICE had dropped in the polls in just "a couple short months."

"Every agency has political capital and the fact that ICE has lost a lot of its, has been a huge win."

Dreamer Protections In Homeland Bill Tied To More Wall Money

[Bloomberg Government](#), July 27, 2018

A bipartisan provision to give undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children a one-year reprieve was included in a House Homeland Security spending measure that also would fund President Donald Trump's border barrier in a move that could become Congress's substitute for a broader immigration compromise.

The House Appropriations Committee approved an amendment by Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.) to their fiscal 2019 Homeland Security spending bill that would bar Immigrations and Customs Enforcement from detaining or deporting undocumented immigrants under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program who retain their eligibility for the program by maintaining a clean criminal record. The provision would protect the so-called Dreamers from the threat of deportation for the fiscal year from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2019.

The measure was a Republican olive branch in an otherwise partisan bill that includes \$5 billion for a border wall and fencing, a key campaign promise by Trump that's opposed by Democrats. It's also a roadmap for the larger compromise between DACA supporters, who have sought permanent protections for immigrants, and Trump, who wants \$25 billion overall to pay for an extensive border wall with Mexico.

Photographer: Luke Sharrett/Bloomberg via Getty Image

A U.S. Border Patrol agent stands for a photograph while keeping watch along the U.S. and Mexico border in Santa Teresa, N.M., Feb. 17.

Yesterday's action by House appropriators is a smaller version of that deal, said Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-Kan.),

chairman of the Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee.

"It's a mini-compromise based on what the president laid out," Yoder said. "It's a version of what we already approved on the House floor. That was \$25 billion in exchange for making DACA permanent. This is \$5 billion for a one year protection of DACA."

Trump announced last year he would end the DACA program offering legal status to some immigrants, but the move has been delayed as a lawsuit works its way through the court system.

The Appropriations Committee adopted the Aguilar amendment by voice vote, and the \$51.4 billion spending bill was advanced out of the committee by a 29-22 vote yesterday. The committee also adopted by voice vote an amendment by Aguilar that would specifically bar the detention or deportation of veterans or active duty service members under DACA.

The protections for the young immigrants still must be agreed to by the full House and the Senate. The Senate's Homeland Security spending bill does not include a provision protecting those in the DACA program and includes \$1.6 billion for a border wall and fencing.

Lawmakers have previously said a final deal on contentious bills, including Homeland Security spending, may have to wait until after the midterm elections in November. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said in a press conference this morning some departments will need to be funded under a continuing resolution after the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) met with Trump yesterday to discuss an appropriations strategy, among other issues. Trump agreed with the broader strategy to pass as many bills as possible before Sept. 30, Ryan said in a press conference today. Trump isn't rushing appropriators to pass the Homeland Security spending bill, he added.

"It's not a question of 'if.' It's a question of 'when,'" Ryan said of approving border wall funding. "And the president is willing to be patient to make sure that we get what we need, so that we can get that done because border security is important."

Aguilar praised the deal on the Dreamers, even though it's a stopgap measure.

"It does a reasonable amount of good," he said in an interview. "To offer certainty for these young people, to at least tell them that deportation and detention is something that ICE should not be doing, is very significant. I want a permanent solution just like they do, but in the absence of the leadership that is necessary to do that here in Congress, I was very pleased that in a bipartisan way, we were able to protect Dreamers and these DACA individuals."

While the House has typically taken a more partisan path on appropriations, and its Homeland Security spending bill was advanced along party lines, Yoder said he agreed to the DACA amendments with the Senate in mind. A final bill will need 60 votes in the Senate, meaning it must be bipartisan.

He said to get the votes in the Senate for a measure that includes Trump's \$5 billion wall request "you are going to have to be willing to compromise on other provisions in order for Democrats to be comfortable with the final package."

"We need nine Democratic votes in the Senate, and I think it's always been clear what the president laid out. It was his proposal: DACA and border security should be married together in a bipartisan compromise," Yoder said. Senate Minibus

The Senate may have to wait until next week to pass its four-bill spending package (H.R. 6147) covering Interior-Environment, Financial Services, Agriculture-FDA and Transportation-HUD appropriations. Senators are set to leave Washington at the end of the day, and a vote on the bill hasn't been scheduled as members continue to consider amendments. Hundreds of amendments have been filed, few of which will get a vote on the floor.

Senate Appropriations ranking member Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) said in a statement this morning that the Senate "must vote" on his amendment adding \$250 million in funds for election-security grants to states.

Leahy's amendment was rejected in a 16-15 vote in committee along party lines, but the issue has become even more prominent since the Justice Department indicted 12 Russian military officials for interfering in the 2016 presidential election and since Trump refused to endorse U.S. intelligence conclusions on the meddling at the Helsinki summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Speeches are not enough," Leahy said in the statement. "We must vote."

Defense Bundle: Trump didn't object to Republican leaders' proposal to package their defense and Labor-HHS-Education spending bills together, Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) told reporters today, citing a conversation relayed to him by McConnell. The package would comprise about two-thirds of all federal discretionary spending.

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Judge To Appoint Special Monitor To Oversee Detention Facilities : NPR

By Joel Rose Jean Guerrero Julie Small
[NPR](#), July 27, 2018

The federal judge who ordered the reunification of thousands of migrant families says the Trump administration deserves “great credit” for its efforts.

But Judge Dana Sabraw also faulted the administration for “losing” hundreds of parents, leaving a significant number of families separated a day after the court-imposed deadline to reunite them.

At a status conference Friday afternoon in San Diego, Sabraw said the priority now must be the hundreds of families that could not be reunited — including more than 400 children who are still in government custody because their parents were deported without them, likely to Central America.

“It’s as if the government wants applause for cleaning up its own mess” without cleaning it up completely, said Lee Gelernt, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, which brought the lawsuit challenging the family separation policy.

The Trump administration said it reunified more than 1,400 children with their parents, and hundreds more with sponsors or family members, by the deadline. Now the administration is pushing to quickly deport many of those same families.

The ACLU is asking the judge for a one-week waiting period for parents to weigh their legal options before being deported. Lawyers for the government counter that 48 hours’ notice should be enough.

Judge Sabraw said he would rule on that question soon. And he laid out plans to stay involved in the reunification process, with weekly status reports and status conferences going forward.

In a separate hearing in Los Angeles, a federal judge said she’ll appoint an independent monitor to look into reports of neglect and abuse of children at facilities along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The decision comes after immigration lawyers argued that the Trump administration has been holding children and their parents in inhumane conditions. The government denied the allegations, and opposed the appointment of a monitor.

In a hearing on Friday, Judge Dolly Gee said she reached her decision after seeing a “disconnect” between government monitors’ assessment of conditions in facilities in the Rio Grande Valley, and the accounts of more than 200 immigrant children and their parents detailing numerous problems, including spoiled food and foul-smelling water.

After the hearing, attorney Peter Schey of The Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law said the problems are pervasive in facilities all along the Southwest border.

“This includes inadequate food. It includes enforced dehydration. It includes sleep deprivation because children do not have mats to sleep on or blankets,” Schey said. “It includes unsanitary conditions because children do not have soap. They do not have towels. They do not have access to basic toiletries.”

Judge Gee oversees the Flores settlement, a 1997 settlement agreement that says the government has to release migrant children from custody to a relative, sponsor or a facility licensed to care for children within 72 hours.

The parties have until Aug. 10 to agree on a proposed monitor. If they can’t, each side will make suggestions to Judge Gee, and she will choose one.

Judge Demands Independent Audit Of Conditions At Detention Centers For Migrant Children

By Andrea Castillo
[Los Angeles Times](#), July 27, 2018

A federal judge in Los Angeles will appoint an independent auditor to oversee the treatment of children in immigrant detention facilities.

The Friday ruling came a day after the court-imposed deadline for the Trump administration to reunite families separated at the border under its zero-tolerance policy. As of Friday, hundreds of children remained isolated from their parents.

A monitor is expected to be appointed within a few weeks.

Peter Schey, lead counsel and director of the Los Angeles-based Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, said the monitor will oversee all three family detention centers run by Immigration and Customs Enforcement — two in Texas and one in Pennsylvania — as well as Border Patrol facilities in the Rio Grande sector along the Texas border.

Schey’s group filed a motion seeking an independent monitor for the Rio Grande sector after lawyers observed inhumane conditions there. He said his team will discuss in the coming weeks whether to file another motion asking that the monitor also oversee all other Border Patrol facilities along the border.

The group filed a scathing report last week including testimony from more than 200 parents and children held in California, Texas and other states who described cramped cells without enough bedding to sleep, cold or frozen food and a lack of basic hygiene products.

A Mexican woman said her daughter had wet herself on their first night because there were so many people sleeping in the room that she couldn’t get to the toilet. A Guatemalan boy told attorneys that he had no soap, towels or a toothbrush.

"These are problems that appear to be pervasive," Schey said Friday. "We're hoping that that has a salutary effect on Border Patrol operations throughout the southern border. Hopefully they won't wait until we bring a new motion to expand the special monitor before they will learn from this and correct their ways."

The interviews were done through a 1997 court settlement called the Flores agreement that governs how long migrant children may be held in custody and under what conditions. The settlement allows attorneys to periodically inspect detention facilities that children are held in.

This month, U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee rejected the federal government's request to renegotiate the terms of the Flores agreement to hold children for longer than 20 days.

She ruled in 2015 that the government had breached the agreement by allowing rooms that were cold and overcrowded as well as inadequate nutrition and hygiene.

Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman Katie Waldman said the agency maintains the highest standards of care for people in its custody.

"DHS facilities undergo constant unannounced inspections by outside groups, the Department's Inspector General and court ordered monitors," she said. "DHS take our responsibilities extremely seriously and perform them professionally and humanely."

Central Americans Seeking Path To US Have Few Legal Options

By Amy Taxin

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

Maria Santamaria made sure to follow the U.S. immigration rules.

She obtained a green card through her husband, came to the country on an immigrant visa and became an American citizen. When her sister came on a travel visa fleeing violence and civil war in her native El Salvador, she helped her get a green card to stay in the U.S.

That process took 16 years.

"If we had not been of the middle class, we never could have come here legally," Santamaria said. "They would never give a visa to the poor."

At a time when President Donald Trump and other conservatives are repeatedly calling on people to come here legally, most immigrants have few options to do so under the country's complex immigration system. Visas are hard to come by, especially for immigrants struggling with poverty and joblessness in Central America. The other main option for legal immigration — getting a family member who is an American citizen or green card holder to sponsor them — can take more than a decade.

Trump has again endorsed the legal immigration route in recent weeks amid the furor over his administration's policy

of separating children from parents at the border, saying the immigrants should be sent home and they can try to come back with legal papers in hand.

"I have a solution: tell people not to come to our country illegally," Trump said recently. "Don't come to our country illegally. Come like other people do. Come legally."

The realities of legal immigration in the U.S. aren't quite that simple.

Getting a visitor's visa — known as a B-2 visa — requires proving a certain amount of wealth that most in developing countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras don't have. That's because the visa application requires them to show income, properties or other assets to prove they will likely return to their countries. Other visas require specialized skills, a corporate sponsor or an American relative who will sponsor them in a process that can take years due to a complex quota system.

Those fleeing violence or persecution can seek asylum legally at designated points along the country's southwest border or upon arriving at the airport. But tens of thousands of Central Americans are caught trying to enter the country illegally each year, which experts conceded may be their only way to come unless they have a strong asylum claim or money.

"The main way — if they don't have a relative who sponsored them years ago in a family-based category so they may be current now — to come is they are going to have to apply for a B-2 non-immigrant visa, and they're likely to be denied," said Daniel Sharp, legal director for the Central American Resource Center in Los Angeles.

The near impossibility of getting a visa may lead some migrants to head north without one. Edwin Cazun, a 43-year-old Guatemalan immigrant, said he tried to come to the United States legally by paying for a short-term farmworker visa but was ripped off by the people who claimed they could sell him one.

When he tried to get his money back, he said they threatened to kill him.

He then fled with his son to the United States, leaving behind his wife and four other children, and tried to cross the U.S. border illegally. He and his son — who were separated for more than a month — are now staying with relatives in Hamilton, Ohio, and plan to seek asylum.

"The company told us they were legal, but in the end we found out that they were persons who stole money from the people," he said. "It was pure fraud."

More than 160,000 immigrants from the three Central American countries were caught on the U.S.-Mexico border during the 2017 fiscal year, according to the U.S. Border Patrol. Many traveled as family groups and tens of thousands of children made the trip on their own.

In the same year, roughly 26,000 people from these same countries were granted visas to move permanently to

the United States — the vast majority because a relative had sponsored them. Fewer than 100 were sponsored for a green card by an employer, State Department statistics show.

About 136,000 people were granted so-called B-2 visitor visas to travel to the United States — but on those visas, they are not allowed to stay.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, said Central Americans fleeing persecution can come to designated ports of entry to seek asylum or seek protection in Mexico or other countries. But that's not an option for immigrants seeking a better job or to escape poverty, he said.

"For most people in Central America, just as for most people in the world, there is no way to come here," said Krikorian, whose group wants stricter limits on immigration. "To say they should come legally doesn't mean everybody who wants to get in gets in — it means they need to follow the rules, and it might mean they don't get in."

Santamaria said she believes there are many people coming who, like her sister in the 1980s, are fleeing violence. Others have been convinced they can still reach the American dream by heading north and aren't really seeking humanitarian protection.

For some, she said, it's a mix. Gangs prey on children in poor communities and their parents send them north, fearing for their safety and their future. They could never afford to apply for a visa and those who are wealthy enough to do so wouldn't want to move here, she said.

The 62-year-old Santamaria said she came north to follow her husband, a legal resident who was serving in the U.S. army. Otherwise, she said she probably wouldn't have made the trip, recalling how she was headed for a career as a businesswoman in El Salvador and wound up getting work as a hotel maid after arriving here. She is now organizing director for a hotel workers' union in Los Angeles.

"If I had a visa and a good economic situation in my country I wouldn't come to this country," said Santamaria. "Those who are living well in our country do not come to this one."

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Lawsuit Alleges Migrant Fathers Were Separated From Children Again After Being Reunited

By Emily Birnbaum

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

A court filing on Saturday night alleges at least four migrant fathers were separated from their children again after being reunited with them briefly this week.

The declaration, which was obtained by Mother Jones, was filed as part of the class-action lawsuit on behalf of migrant parents who wish to be reunited with their children. It alleges that the four fathers were given three "choices" when the government reunited them with their children: First, to be deported with their children; second, agree for the children to stay in the U.S. if the parent loses the immigration case; or third, to speak to a lawyer before making the decision.

The fathers are claiming the first option was already selected for them.

The allegation comes days after the government failed to meet a court-ordered deadline to reunite families it separated at the southern border. The government reported that it has reunited 1,442 children ages 5 and older with their parents who were detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and 378 have been "discharged in other appropriate circumstances," including to a sponsor or to their parents in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) custody.

But more than 2,500 children were separated from their parents as part of the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy, which resulted in the separation of families at the U.S.-Mexico border. Though President Trump last month signed an executive order ending the policy, the federal government has scrambled to reunite families separated during its enactment.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on Thursday said as many as 468 separated parents were already deported without their children, and they are demanding the court reunite those families.

One migrant father represented in the Saturday court filing, referred to as "F.G.," was allegedly reunited with his son in Texas on Wednesday. But within hours, immigration officials reportedly distributed the forms with three options.

When F.G. refused to agree to be deported with his son, he was removed from the area and separated from his son a second time, Mother Jones reported.

The testimony reports that ICE agents yelled at parents who tried to choose the option that would allow their children to stay in the U.S., or told them that they were not actually allowed to select that option.

"Asking parents in ICE custody, who are subject to a final order of removal, to make a decision about being removed with or without their children, is part of long-standing policy," an ICE official told Vox. "ICE does not interfere in the parent's decision to allow the child to remain in the U.S. to pursue his or her own legal claim."

Reports have emerged this week that parents who were deported without their children were often misled or lied to by immigration officials. Sometimes, officials presented deportation to parents as the only option and other times, they gave the parents forms in English, a language many of them do not speak.

Chicago Beats Trump In Sanctuary-City Challenge

By Stephen Dinan

[Washington Times](#), July 27, 2018

The Trump administration suffered another legal defeat on its sanctuary city crackdown after a judge Friday permanently blocked the government from retaliating against Chicago's sanctuary policy by stripping away its police grant money.

U.S. District Judge Harry D. Leinenweber, a Reagan appointee to the bench, said the administration is free to track down illegal immigrants on its own, but it cannot force Chicago to cooperate in reporting or turning them over.

His ruling follows similar defeats for the Trump administration in California and Philadelphia, where judges have also ruled against the administration's attempts to condition Byrne Justice Assistance Grant money on better cooperation on immigration.

"Chicago's compliance with the conditions would damage local law enforcement's relationship with immigrant communities and decrease the cooperation essential to prevent and solve crimes both within those communities and Chicago at large," the judge wrote. "Trust once lost is not easily restored."

The ruling confirms an earlier, preliminary decision that had found the government overstepped its powers.

Sanctuary cities have exploded in number since President Trump took office, as states and localities competed with each other to try to protect illegal immigrants from a stepped-up enforcement policy at the national level.

While the policies vary, at root they attempt to shield illegal immigrants from coming into the purview of federal authorities by restricting cooperation between local police and federal officers and agents.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions had sought to push back, saying certain government grants would now depend on jurisdictions agreeing to share information on illegal immigrants in their care, and to give deportation officers access to local prisons and jails to be able to safely take custody of criminal migrants.

Judges have ruled that those conditions go beyond what Congress set in law, and that the executive branch cannot add them.

In an earlier ruling Judge Leinenweber had imposed a nationwide halt to the Sessions policy, but the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has narrowed that, after some chiding by the Supreme Court. That means Friday's ruling only applies, for now, to Chicago.

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Federal Judge Rules Against Trump Justice Department In Chicago 'Sanctuary City' Case

[Chicago Tribune](#), July 27, 2018

A federal judge Friday sided with the city of Chicago in its sanctuary city lawsuit, ruling that the Trump administration does not have the authority to withhold federal public safety funding from the city if it limits its cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials.

The city filed its suit against the U.S. Department of Justice in August, after the department mandated that local governments meet a set of conditions to be eligible for federal grant funding. The conditions included having local governments certify that they would comply with a federal law barring restrictions on federal-local sharing of information on an immigrant's status and granting Homeland Security personnel access to local law enforcement facilities.

U.S. District Judge Harry Leinenweber on Friday agreed with the city, granting a permanent injunction against all three of the conditions the Justice Department sought to impose.

"Today's opinion in favor of Chicago and against the Trump Justice Department marks a major win for all Chicagoans and a significant victory for public safety," Mayor Rahm Emanuel said in a Friday statement. "We will never be coerced or intimidated into abandoning our values as a welcoming city. Welcoming immigrants, refugees and dreamers from every corner of the globe is part of Chicago's history, and part of our future, no matter which way the political winds are blowing in Washington."

City ordinance bars police from granting ICE officials access to people in Chicago police custody, except when they're wanted on a criminal warrant or have a serious criminal conviction. Police also cannot allow ICE agents to use their facilities for investigations, and on-duty officers are not allowed to respond to ICE inquiries or communicate with ICE officials about a person's custody status or release.

Friday's ruling is "another significant legal victory for Chicago and reaffirms the City's position that the Attorney General lacks the authority to create the grant conditions we have challenged," Corporation Counsel Ed Siskel said in a Friday release.

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United Airlines Donates Flights To Reunite Families Separated At Border

By Jacqueline Thomsen

[The Hill](#), July 27, 2018

United Airlines is donating flights to help reunited immigrant families that were separated at the U.S.'s southern border.

The San Francisco Business Times reported Thursday that the pro-immigration lobbying group FWD.us announced United's donation in a Facebook post, calling it "needed, timely, and critical."

"A growing community of support is coming together to reunite families who were separated at the border," the group posted Wednesday. "We are so thankful and happy to announce that United Airlines is jumping in and helping. Thanks to this partnership with United, we are able to provide travel to the recently reunited immigrant families to get to their next destination with dignity."

United added in a comment on the post, "Our company's shared purpose is to connect people and unite the world — we are proud to support your work to help reunify immigrant children and families."

The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) also announced Tuesday that it would donate \$3 million toward its "Flights for Families" project.

RAICES, one of the groups working to reunite families at the border, said in the announcement that it would work with FWD.us and Families Belong Together on the initiative.

FWD.us was founded by Microsoft's Bill Gates, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Dropbox's Drew Houston.

The Trump administration said Thursday evening that it would reunite all eligible separated immigrant children over the age of 5 with their families by the court-ordered deadline at midnight.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) claims that the administration did not meet the deadline because hundreds of immigrant parents were deemed ineligible or deported before they could be reunited with their children.

Several airlines, including United, announced earlier this year that it would not allow federal authorities to use their planes to transport migrant children separated from their families.

President Trump signed an executive order last month to end his administration's policy of separating immigrant children from their parents at the border, which was a result of the administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

Fixing Flores Agreement Is The Only Solution To Immigrant Family Separation And Detention

By Sen. Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis And Ted Cruz
[USA Today](#), July 29, 2018

Like millions across our country, we too were horrified at the sight of thousands of children being separated from their parents. As parents ourselves, we can only imagine the pain and anguish these families faced. But, as U.S. Senators — and more importantly, as Americans — we also

understand that our immigration system must also enforce our laws.

While this problem has persisted across the last five administrations, and there is legitimate criticism which can be directed towards this administration's handling of this matter, the fact remains that the very institution in which we serve — the U.S. Congress — bears much of the blame for our current immigration crisis. For years, Congress has failed to take one simple step which could have prevented the family separations we now decry: repealing the Flores v. Reno consent decree as it relates to families.

When the U.S. government first entered into the Flores consent decree it was a much-needed step towards ensuring the humane and dignified treatment of unaccompanied alien children — children often thousands of miles from their parents. That decree required immigration authorities to release children from custody within 20 days in favor of finding foster families or other placements. But in 2015, a single court in California expanded Flores to children with their families, an expansion with dramatic consequences. Flores agreement isn't all bad

That decision, which was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, effectively forces federal immigration authorities to make a stark choice: separate families by releasing only the children after 20 days or keep families together and release them all into the U.S. Neither of these options is a good choice. We should not have to choose between tearing children from their parents and enforcing our nation's lawful immigration system.

It's important to remember that no one wants to get rid of the good parts of Flores. For example, Flores required, among other things, certain minimum standards of care for unaccompanied alien children while in federal custody. No one disagrees that everyone in federal custody should be treated humanely, which is why Congress unanimously passed legislation in 2008 codifying many of these standards for unaccompanied children.

Trump-Sessions immigration policies rip children from parents and shred American values

Immigration, ethics, Russia: Welcome to Trump World, where all scandals are above average

But Congress has yet to address how to process families detained because they came here illegally. As a consequence, a single federal court can — and has — ordered us to return to the failed "catch and release" policies that have caused tens of thousands of families to make the dangerous journey to cross our southern border. By fixing the current immigration laws and legislatively modifying the Flores decree as it applies to family units, we can solve these problems in a humane and fair way. Amend, don't end Flores settlement

For weeks, we have worked together with our Senate colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to solve this crisis. After

countless hours of discussion, we believe the path forward is a relatively simple one. First, Congress needs to make clear that the Flores consent decree does not apply to family units. The Flores consent decree and the standards of care required for unaccompanied minor children would remain in effect, but federal authorities would have the ability to keep families together pending the outcome of their immigration case.

Second, Congress needs to codify the high humane standards we expect families to be treated with while they are kept in federal custody in family residential centers. The public is right to be concerned that individuals may receive inadequate care and shelter, and Congress should ensure that no one is treated with any less dignity than they deserve.

Third, and finally, Congress should authorize and appropriate money for more immigration judges, so that cases can be adjudicated and resolved quickly. Keeping families in federal custody temporarily is an appropriate policy solution to this crisis, but only if cases are resolved expeditiously.

Fixing these problems will end this crisis and return integrity to our nation's lawful immigration system.

Some of our colleagues criticize these solutions and claim they would result in the "indefinite detention" of families. This simply is not true and ignores well-established facts. When families are kept in federal custody they are placed on the expedited detained docket, where most cases are resolved within about 40 days.

It is clear that a legislative fix to the Flores consent decree is the only viable solution. Such a fix will allow families to stay together and will ensure no future administration has to make the Hobson's choice created by the Flores consent decree if another surge in illegal migration of family units occurs. We hope our Democratic colleagues will join with us to pass such a fix in the U.S. Senate. We can keep families together and respect the rule of law. We believe this is the way forward, and we know it is the right thing to do for our country.

Chuck Grassley is a Republican senator from Iowa. Follow him on Twitter: @ChuckGrassley. Thom Tillis is a Republican senator from North Carolina. Follow him on Twitter: @SenThomTillis. Ted Cruz is a Republican senator from Texas. Follow him on Twitter: @SenTedCruz.

If Trump's So Worried About Rigged Elections, No One Show Him His Census

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

PRESIDENT TRUMP has complained incessantly about rigged elections. But this, not phantom voter fraud, is what modern-day election-rigging looks like in the United States:

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced in March that he would add a new question to the 2020 Census form, asking respondents about citizenship status. At the time, he testified under oath before Congress that the Justice Department "initiated" the move to add the question in December 2017, arguing that Justice needed better information on the country's voting-age population to better enforce the Voting Rights Act. The explanation was fishy from the start, since, as a federal judge noted this month, the Trump administration "has shown little interest in enforcing the Voting Rights Act."

In fact, it is looking more and more as if one of the real initiators was former White House strategist and anti-immigration provocateur Stephen K. Bannon, according to emails the Commerce Department had to release last week. "Steve Bannon has asked that the Secretary talk to someone about the census," Brooke Alexander, a Commerce Department senior adviser, wrote in an April 2017 email — well before the Justice Department asked for the change. "He could do it from the car on the way to a dinner."

Mr. Ross was also keen well before Justice officially weighed in. He pressed the case in an email to Earl Comstock, director of the department's Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, in May 2017. "I am mystified why nothing have [sic] been done in response to my months old request that we include the citizenship question. Why not?" Mr. Comstock replied that he would "get that in place" and wrote, "We need to work with Justice to get them to request that citizenship be added back as a census question."

As Commerce staff apparently searched for and obtained a pretext to add the question, experts warned Mr. Ross it was a bad idea. John M. Abowd, the chief scientist and associate director for research and methodology at Commerce, wrote in a January letter that the proposal would be extremely expensive and harm the quality of the census count.

From the beginning, adding the question looked like a ruse to punish blue states. The constitutionally mandated census is supposed to count everyone in the country, citizen and noncitizen. The count determines where federal money goes and how many congressional seats and presidential electors each state gets. Mr. Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric was already bound to reduce response rates among immigrants. It is easy to imagine many tossing their census forms immediately after reading the citizenship question, for fear the federal government would be able to locate them. Large cities with high immigrant populations — which tend to be in blue states — would lose out.

There is now more evidence suggesting that this was the point and that Mr. Ross used his official powers over what should be a nonpartisan count to game the system for Republicans. The newly released emails also bolster the case

that Mr. Ross was not truthful about how he made the decision.

As the real story emerges, Mr. Ross should strike the citizenship question from the 2020 Census form. If he does not, Congress should do it for him.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Philadelphia To Stop Giving ICE Access To Real-time Arrest Database

By Claudia Lauer

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

PHILADELPHIA – Philadelphia will stop giving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement access to a real-time arrest database, saying the agency is misusing the information to conduct sweeps in which otherwise law-abiding immigrants are also being caught up. Federal officials said the decision puts U.S. citizens in danger.

“We’re not going to provide them with information so they can go out and round people up,” Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney said Friday as he announced his decision to let a decade-old contract with ICE expire at the end of next month.

Kenney said immigration officers are wrongly using the database to go to homes and workplaces of people who list foreign countries of origin and arresting other people who are in the country illegally but are otherwise not accused of any crimes.

U.S. Homeland Security spokeswoman Katie Waldman called the decision irresponsible and said the city will end up “harboring criminal aliens.”

“Sanctuary-city policies make American communities like Philadelphia less safe by putting the rights of criminal aliens over the safety and security of American citizens,” Waldman said. “Despite the misguided action taken by Philadelphia today, DHS will continue to work to remove illegal aliens and uphold public safety.”

Two of three stakeholders in the contract – the city, the district attorney and the city courts – had to vote to end it. District Attorney Larry Krasner had said this month he would oppose the contract’s renewal, saying it promotes oppressive practices.

Kenney said the federal agency’s actions have created fear and distrust in the city’s immigrant community and made it more difficult for police to solve crimes.

ICE has previously said it would focus on immediate deportation for people in the country illegally who had felony convictions or who were suspected of felonies.

Juntos, an immigrant advocacy group, said the city’s decision will reduce the ability of ICE “to disappear our loved ones and tear apart families.”

As a sanctuary city, Philadelphia had already limited cooperation with immigration enforcement. It won’t release inmates to ICE without a judicial warrant.

The Trump administration wants to cut funding to the city as a result but has so far been blocked by a judge.

“How anyone can define this as making America great again is beyond me,” the mayor said.

Anyone who interacts with law enforcement is entered into the database, including those who are arrested, victims and witnesses, with limits on what ICE officers can view.

The mayor said the city’s conversations in recent weeks with ICE only confirmed what he had feared.

Philadelphia entered into the contract in 2008, city solicitor Marcel Pratt said, and revised it in 2009 to shield witness and victim information from the agency, as well as to eliminate immigration status.

In a termination letter sent to ICE on Thursday, Pratt said the contract “has created the false perception that the city is willing to be an extension of ICE.”

“It is not in the best interests of the city and its residents for the city to acquiesce to that perception,” Pratt wrote.

The city said it has not yet received a response to its letter.

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Mayor Jim Kenney Ends Philadelphia’s Data-sharing Contract With ICE

By Jeff Gammage

[Philadelphia Inquirer](#), July 27, 2018

Mayor Kenney has terminated a controversial city contract that allows federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to access a key law-enforcement database, known as PARS, and use that information against undocumented, but otherwise law-abiding, immigrants in Philadelphia.

“I cannot in good conscience allow the agreement to continue,” the mayor said.

The decision comes after months of consultation with community groups, lawyers and immigrant advocates, and follows weeks of tumultuous protests by anti-ICE demonstrators, who on Wednesday took over and held a City Hall stairway.

A formal announcement is scheduled for Friday afternoon at City Hall. ICE officials were informed Thursday in an emailed letter from City Solicitor Marcel Pratt.

Kenney said he had grown increasingly concerned that ICE was using the database “in inappropriate ways,” including to conduct investigations of undocumented immigrants in Philadelphia who had not broken any other laws.

That sows fear and distrust in immigrant communities, the mayor said, with the effect of discouraging crime victims and witnesses from coming forward and, in turn, making it harder for Philadelphia police to solve crimes.

Discussions with ICE officials did not allay those concerns — it confirmed them, Kenney said.

Specifically, city officials said, multiple considerations led to the decision to not renew the contract, which expires Aug. 31. According to the Kenney administration:

- At a July 18 meeting, ICE officials conceded that the agency's use of PARS can result in immigration enforcement actions against city residents who have not been accused or convicted of a crime.

- ICE claims it was impractical to adopt procedures that would prevent agents from arresting law-abiding residents for civil immigration violations when the agency acted on information found in PARS.

- Each day, ICE probes PARS to find people who were born outside the United States, then targets them for investigation, even though the database does not list their immigration status.

- The agency produced no information to allay city officials' concerns about the profiling of residents by race, ethnicity, or national origin.

- ICE officials said they do not audit or monitor the agency's use of PARS.

PARS is an acronym for a real-time computer database of arrests, operated by the city of Philadelphia and shared via contract with ICE, the agency responsible for finding and deporting people who are in the country without documentation.

Three city entities rely on PARS — the District Attorney's Office, the court system, and the Police Department, which is responsible to the mayor. In the past, consensus among the three allowed the agreement with ICE to continue.

Now, both the District Attorney and the mayor have withdrawn their consent, and the court system, officials say, has abstained.

PARS does not collect information on immigration status. But immigration advocates contend the database is still dangerous, because it notes country of origin and Social Security number — enough for ICE agents to undertake an investigation.

"Data and speed is the perfect combo for ICE to use Philly resources to hunt down immigrants," Juntos spokesperson Miguel Andrade tweeted earlier this month.

District Attorney Larry Krasner publicly stated his opposition to renewing the agreement, and on Thursday City Councilwoman Helen Gym called for its end.

Kenney has been outspoken in support of immigrants, including filing a federal "sanctuary city" lawsuit against the Trump administration over the right to limit police cooperation

with ICE. Last month, a federal judge ruled for Philadelphia, saying the city's refusal to help enforce immigration laws was based on policies that were reasonable, rational, and equitable. The sharing of PARS data was examined during the trial.

The PARS matter has continued to simmer since the weather turned warm.

This month, as many as 175 demonstrators massed outside the Philadelphia office of ICE at Eighth and Cherry Streets, calling for the agency to be abolished, for the family detention center in Berks County to be shut down, and for the city government to end the PARS agreement. An Occupy ICE encampment that was forcibly removed from the ICE office environs has relocated to the east side of City Hall.

In his letter notifying ICE field office Director Simona Flores of the termination of the PARS agreement, solicitor Pratt noted that the contract can be ended for any reason or no reason.

The decision is consistent with the administration's "Welcoming City" policies, he wrote, "which reflect the principle that our city is safer, healthier and more inviting" when residents need not fear about their immigration status.

The PARS agreement "has created the false perception that the city is willing to be an extension of ICE," he wrote.

Miriam Enriquez, the Kenney administration's director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs, called ending the PARS contract "the right decision."

"Witnesses and victims of crime in our city will know they need not fear adverse immigration consequences when they report crimes or use services," she said.

Menendez: I Wouldn't Support ICE Contract With Jail

[NJ News](#), July 28, 2018

NORTH BERGEN — U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez yesterday weighed in on Hudson County's decision to renew its financial agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, saying if he were in charge he would not support "ICE's mission as it relates to detaining individuals."

Menendez, a Democrat, appeared at Boulevard Diner to speak with more than a dozen women about November's midterm elections. The Jersey Journal asked Menendez about the county's decision, approved by its freeholders on July 12, to renew its multi-year contract with ICE to house immigrant detainees in the county's Kearny jail.

"That's a decision for the county to make," he said. "From my perspective, I would not be supporting, in any dimension, if I had the ability, ICE's mission as it relates to detaining individuals, particularly those who are just seeking a better pathway to their lives or who are seeking asylum."

Menendez has been strongly critical of the Trump administration's policies regarding immigrant detention, but

he is also closely aligned with Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise and the Democratic freeholders who approved DeGise's request to renew the ICE contract.

That vote was slammed by liberal activists who believe the county should not partner with ICE. One of the freeholders who voted in favor, Anthony Romano, was heckled at a recent Hoboken event by a man who yelled out, "Stop taking ICE money, Romano."

The ICE deal, first approved in 1996, is a lucrative one for the county, which expects to rake in \$19 million this year from housing immigrants. Proponents of the agreement argue that it helps immigrants by keeping them close to their families and lawyers.

Menendez said yesterday that he understands that argument, but still thinks the county "shouldn't support" ICE.

"I'm all for the detention of criminal aliens. but overwhelmingly what we're talking about are people who either are fleeing horrific violence or ultimately seeking a better path in their lives as so many people who came to this country did," he said. "So I don't like assisting the Trump administration in that regard."

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ICE Set To Deport Wife Of Marine, An Iraq War Veteran, In August

By Maria Perez

[Newsweek](#), July 26, 2018

The wife of a retired U.S. Marine and Iraq war combat veteran is set to be deported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement early next month.

Alejandra Juarez, 38, was told by ICE officials that she has nine days left in the U.S. before she is deported back to Mexico, the Military Times reported. Her immigration status was first questioned at a traffic stop in 2013, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Juarez is accused of illegally crossing the border to come to the U.S. in 1998. She married her husband, Marine Sergeant Cuauhtemoc "Temo" Juarez in 2000, the Military Times said. Temo was an infantryman who served in the Marines from 1995 to 1999, the newspaper said. He was deployed in South America and Africa before he moved to Orlando, Florida, to join the Army National Guard.

The couple has two daughters together, Estela, 8, and Pamela, 16, who face the prospect of a split family life. The family's attorney, Chelsea Nowel, told the publication that Juarez does not have a criminal record despite the accusation that she entered the country illegally 20 years ago.

"The United States has a lot of policies in place to protect veterans and active duty and their families, and it is

absolutely, incredibly, frustrating that these are not being made available to the wife of a decorated veteran who has served overseas multiple times," Nowel told the publication. "We are very hopeful we will be able to work with the Department of Homeland Security and with ICE to afford her an ability to stay."

Democratic Representative Darren Soto, of Florida, told the Military Times that he filed a bill, called the "Patriot Spouses Act," which would protect Juarez and allow her to stay in the U.S., but the bill has not been looked at yet by a House committee.

"Alejandra deserves to stay in the country she has called home for over 20 years, the country her husband patriotically served as a Marine and Florida National Guardsman. The only country her two American-born daughters have known," Soto said.

In a statement to Newsweek, an ICE spokesperson said that Juarez was caught attempting to illegally enter the U.S. in 1998 and removed, but illegally entered the U.S. after removal.

"ICE arrested her in August 2013 and notified her the agency would reinstate her prior removal order," the statement read. "ICE subsequently exercised temporary discretion by releasing her on an Order of Supervision and granted her temporary stays of removal in August 2015 and August 2016. At this time, Juarez must comply with her removal order and depart the U.S."

President Donald Trump has targeted immigrants since taking office—both in his rhetoric, in which he often describes them as animals or criminals, and in several controversial policies.

There was a national outcry over a determined effort to prosecute those caught crossing the border illegally, and to separate any small children from their parents while their cases are handled. The policy means that about 2,300 children have been held in separate detention centers.

On Tuesday, ICE officials were ordered by a federal judge to release an Ecuadorian immigrant being held for deportation after ICE agents arrested him for delivering pizza to an army base in Brooklyn, New York.

This has been updated to include a comment from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

17-Year Old Guatemalan Girl Fears Deportation

By Nancy Montoya

[Arizona Public Media](#), July 26, 2018

Seventeen-year-old Jesse Tomas from Guatemala may be spending her final days in the United States awaiting deportation, according to the judge evaluating her immigration case.

After an initial meeting with Immigration and Customs Enforcement Thursday, Jesse said she and her father Tomas were told that they will likely be deported back to Guatemala. They have no documents to prove they are in fear for their lives if they return to their country.

The teenager had endured threats of rape and assaults from gang members who wanted her father to pay them for her safety. She and her father fled to the U.S. to seek asylum. They left behind Jesse's two younger brothers and her mother in a rural village.

The two traveled through Mexico and made their way to Nogales where they legally asked for asylum. Then they temporarily stayed at a shelter in Tucson.

U.S. Immigration officials cleared them to travel to West Palm Beach, Florida, where they have friends, to await the asylum hearing.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced in early July that fear of gang and domestic violence will no longer be accepted by U.S. immigration as reasons for granting asylum.

"My father is under a lot of pressure" Jesse said. There was no one to represent them at the hearing and she said understanding the proceeding was almost impossible.

Jesse said a translator told them that an ICE agent would be by to see them in a day or two and advised them to go home and wait. Her father left early in the morning to get food and had not returned 12 hours later, she said.

She fears he may have already been picked up by immigration officials. She said by phone that she plans to lock the door of the small bedroom they rented from another Guatemalan family and wait.

'Where Can Anyone Seek Justice?': Experts Warn ICE Courthouse Arrests May Mean Witnesses, Victims Won't Show Up

By Kaelyn Forde

[ABC News](#), July 27, 2018

A mother of two is fighting to stay in the country after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested her and her teen son, both victims of alleged domestic violence, at a North Carolina courthouse earlier this month.

The plainclothes ICE agents approached Maria, 38, and her son, 16, as they finished a hearing at Mecklenburg County Court, her public defender said.

"I was heading toward the elevators and I saw Maria's 16-year-old son being handcuffed," Herman Little, her public defender, told ABC News. "When I got around the corner, I saw that Maria was being arrested and handcuffed. When I approached, one of the ICE agents told me, 'Get back, get back.' I said, 'What do you mean? I'm her attorney, this is my client.'"

Melba Smith Evans/Comunidad Colectiva

Maria (center, in red top) recounts the story of her arrest in a statement shared by Elisa Hernandez of Alerta Migratoria, an immigrants' rights group based in North Carolina.

One of the agents flashed his ICE badge and explained why they were taking Maria, Little said. The Colombian immigrant's attorneys asked ABC News not to use her last name because she is the victim of alleged domestic violence.

"I did tell him that she has a 2-year-old son in the courthouse day care and, you know, I have to know what's going on," Little said. "And he finally ends up telling me, 'Maria's undocumented.'"

"So I told Maria through the interpreter who was standing right near me that everything's going to be OK. She was hysterical, crying, very afraid."

ICE arrested Maria July 9 because of the two pending criminal charges-- misdemeanor simple assault and misdemeanor larceny -- her alleged abuser filed against her, the agency said.

ICE released her the same day, before the county dropped the two criminal charges against her two weeks later because of insufficient evidence, a Mecklenburg County official said.

But as ICE steps up its enforcement actions, including at courthouses, experts warn that such arrests could have a chilling effect on immigrants' willingness to access and participate in the criminal justice system. Maria is now in removal proceedings, as are many others in Mecklenburg. The county has the fastest growing number of people with pending cases in U.S. immigration court; the number of people with pending cases rose 34 percent between May and December of 2017, according to the TRAC database maintained by Syracuse University.

"There's this term 'crimmigration' to describe the way in which the criminal justice system is increasingly blending with the immigration enforcement system, and this is really what we are talking about," Professor Monica Varsanyi of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City said.

"It's very common for abusers to cross-petition or file charges against their victims. It happens all the time as a way to retaliate against the victim, whether it's out of shame or embarrassment or what have you.

"We definitely found in our research that the places that were more enforcement-oriented, the places that chose to cooperate more closely with the federal government on immigration enforcement, it causes a chill in the relationship between the immigrant communities and the police forces," Varsanyi, co-author of the book "Policing Immigrants: Local Law Enforcement on the Front Lines," said.

"In chilling the relationship between those two communities, it impacted public safety overall."

And that is something that worries public defenders like Little.

"If you have a situation where nobody comes to court because they are afraid of being deported, then where can anyone seek justice?" he said.

Maria did not respond to ABC News' questions sent via her lawyer. 'It was surreal'

Maria came to the United States in 2016 on a fiance visa, which requires visa holders to get married within 90 days of entering the country, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Maria and her then-fiance, Danny Melendez, did not get married but did have a son together. When Melendez allegedly became physically abusive toward Maria and her 16-year-old son, she decided to leave him. Melendez was arrested Jan. 10 and charged with misdemeanor simple assault, according to Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department records.

Maria was granted an emergency protective order against Melendez and fled to a domestic violence shelter, her lawyer said. In another hearing, she was granted a more permanent protective order against him – and that's when Little said Melendez decided to file his own charges.

"Maria and her older son faced physical abuse, definitely emotional abuse and abuse of the criminal process: using the criminal justice system to affect someone, to hurt someone, with no merit at all," Little said.

"In that hearing, [Melendez] was told what could come about if that protective order was imposed by a judge. Right after that hearing, he went to the magistrate to get a summons against her. So that tells you how it was retaliatory. He knew what he was facing with that protective order."

Melendez filed misdemeanor simple assault and larceny charges against Maria, according to court records. Little said among the belongings Maria was accused of stealing was the baby's crib. Melendez's attorney did not respond to ABC News' request for comment.

"I told Maria through the interpreter who was standing right near me that everything's going to be ok. She was hysterical, crying, very afraid.

On July 9, Maria and her older son went to court to discuss the alleged domestic violence case in which they said they were victims and the charges Melendez had filed against her. Maria put her 2-year-old son in the court's onsite day care, Little said.

When the meetings were over and the judge had moved to continue the case, Little started to head back to his office, he said. That's when he saw Maria and her older son being handcuffed.

One of the ICE agents, who were dressed in plainclothes, threatened to arrest him, too, he said.

"He made it known to me that if I didn't back up, then he would take me into custody," Little said. "I thought, 'You should find out why she's in court before you just jump and take somebody into custody.' That puzzled me.

"It was surreal. I knew they were kind of overstepping their bounds," Little added.

But Little said his biggest concern was that Melendez, who had lost unsupervised custody of his son, would try to get the 2-year-old from the court's day care. Both he and the 2-year-old child have the same last name. Little said he asked a fellow attorney to follow Maria, her son and the agents to their car while he alerted the daycare.

"I went to the day care at the courthouse and told them not to release the 2-year-old son to anybody but Maria," Little said. "I didn't know for sure she was going to be released that day but I just had the thought that the ex-fiance was kind of behind all of this. I was worried also the child would be taken into the Department of Social Services custody."

Maria and her older son were released later that day and picked up the younger child from day care. She is now awaiting a court date in federal immigration court. Evaluating the 'totality of circumstances'

ICE arrested Maria because of the charges Melendez had filed against her, agency spokesman Bryan Cox said, declining to comment on her son's case because he is a minor.

"Bottom line: she was there as a defendant facing local criminal charges herself," Cox said via email. "You'll have to ask local authorities as to why those charges were filed as ICE cannot speak to charges filed by another entity, but this fact is not in dispute."

When asked whether the dismissal of those charges would affect her immigration removal proceedings, Cox said: "Not directly, as it remains the case she is unlawfully present in the U.S. However, it does impact the totality of the circumstances that will be evaluated when her case is considered."

Cox also provided ABC News with a statement about the history of Maria's case. ABC News has redacted her last name from the statement because she is a victim of alleged domestic violence.

"Unlawfully present Colombian national Maria [last name redacted by ABC News] was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement July 9 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, during a targeted enforcement action following her court appearance as the defendant on misdemeanor criminal charges in Mecklenburg County. ICE briefly detained [Maria] to serve her with paperwork placing her into removal proceedings before the federal immigration courts and then released her on her own recognizance that same day after transporting her back to the courthouse," the statement read.

"[Maria] legally entered the U.S. in August 2016; however, she subsequently failed to depart the country as required under the terms of her admission and she has been unlawfully present since the expiration of her visa in

November 2016. A federal immigration judge will now decide her case," the statement continued.

Lisa Diefenderfer, Maria's immigration attorney from the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, said the mother of two should never have been arrested in the first place.

"ICE said they arrested her because she's a danger and that's why they were after her, because she was there on a criminal charge," Diefenderfer said.

"It's very common for abusers to cross-petition or file charges against their victims. It happens all the time as a way to retaliate against the victim, whether it's out of shame or embarrassment or what have you."

For its part, ICE does not view courthouses as it does schools, churches or hospitals, which are all part of its "sensitive locations" policy that states that enforcement actions at these places "should generally be avoided."

ICE's policy states it "will not make civil immigration arrests inside courthouses indiscriminately. ICE civil immigration enforcement actions inside courthouses include actions against specific, targeted aliens with criminal convictions, gang members, national security or public safety threats, aliens who have been ordered removed from the United States but have failed to depart (fugitives), and aliens who have re-entered the country illegally after being removed, when ICE officers or agents have information that leads them to believe the targeted aliens are present at that specific location."

Advocates argue that Maria did not fit the requirements of a "public safety threat" and are worried about the message her arrest sends to other crime victims who are undocumented.

"If witnesses don't show up, that impedes the justice system and that doesn't make our society safer for anyone. If crimes can't be prosecuted properly, then what is the point?"

"She was a victim of domestic violence who came to court trying to seek justice and seek protection from her abuser and she was faced with retaliation from ICE," Stefania Arteaga, an advocate with Comunidad Colectiva, said. "I think it goes to show that they are trying to make an example of Maria."

Varsanyi, the John Jay College professor, said her research bears that out.

"If there's a person – more often than not, a woman – who has been a domestic violence victim, if she knows that her local police force is closely tied in with ICE and does immigration enforcement screenings, she would probably hesitate to get in touch with the police in that circumstance, and that's certainly what we found in our research," Varsanyi said.

"when you do have a close relationship between police and immigrant communities, that's when public safety is upheld more, and people who are actually criminals get

brought to the attention of police as opposed to folks who are domestic violence victims.

Diefenderfer, Maria's immigration attorney, also took issue with ICE's decision to release Maria's full name to the media because she is a victim of alleged domestic violence living at a shelter. Many domestic violence shelters do not publicize their addresses in case abusers try to retaliate against victims and their children.

"Because they have already released many of her intimate details, if the wrong person says something about what her address is or the wrong document happens to get leaked, we notified ICE that they should not be listing her address on any of these documents because it is a domestic violence shelter, so that could endanger an entire shelter full of people," Diefenderfer said. 'Crimmigration'

Mecklenburg County had participated in a program known as 287(g), which gives certain local law enforcement officers the power to act as immigration agents and question individuals about their immigration status and make related arrests.

But such programs have not made communities safer, professor Varsanyi said.

"Whenever you hear from people who are more enforcement-oriented, they say, 'Well, we need to crack down on crime, we can't let criminals run free,' all these things you hear around sanctuary cities and so forth," Varsanyi said. "Empirically speaking, a lot of research has been done that demonstrates that's the complete opposite logic of what happens. That when you do have a close relationship between police and immigrant communities, that's when public safety is upheld more, and people who are actually criminals get brought to the attention of police as opposed to folks who are domestic violence victims."

In May, Mecklenburg County voted in a new sheriff, Garry McFadden, who has pledged to end local involvement in 287(g). ICE responded with a statement opposing McFadden's move and saying that it means the agency will have to rely on sending agents out into the field to arrest people rather than arresting them at jails, ABC Charlotte affiliate WSOC-TV reported.

Arteaga, the immigration advocate, said, "For us, it's extremely concerning, the actions we are seeing right now at the court. They're definitely sending a clear message that they do not believe immigrants should be seeking justice in any way, shape or form." 'What is the point?'

Melendez, Maria's former fiance, is due to appear in court Aug. 22 on the simple assault charge, according to court records. Maria is waiting to see whether she will be able to stay in the United States with her children, Diefenderfer said, something that is sure to be a long process.

"It's certainly no guarantee," Diefenderfer said. "It's certainly a pretty scary situation we're in right now with

immigration in this country. There's almost zero discretion anymore, so they don't care when it's a humanitarian issue."

The lawyer said she intends to apply for a visa for Maria that would make her eligible for a green card, but she hopes Maria won't be issued an order of deportation while that petition is pending.

Her public defender Little believes federal immigration officials should let state cases play out before deporting people, he said.

"I think that if a defendant or a victim is involved in the state criminal justice system, I don't believe immigration should be allowed to take any action on their status at all until that state criminal court case is finished," he said.

Diefenderfer agreed.

"If witnesses don't show up, that impedes the justice system and that doesn't make our society safer for anyone," she said.

"If crimes can't be prosecuted properly, then what is the point? If all this immigration enforcement is supposed to be keeping us citizens safer, then they are doing a poor job."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Groups Unite Over Human Trafficking

By Molly Smith

[McAllen \(TX\) Monitor](#), July 28, 2018

PHARR — While the Rio Grande Valley's status as a major smuggling corridor is no secret, law enforcement agencies and nonprofit organizations are working to expose the presence of human traffickers and trafficking victims ahead of Monday's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

"When it comes to human trafficking, our best offense is the community," Hidalgo County First Assistant Criminal District Attorney Juan Villegas told stakeholders gathered Thursday to discuss the topic. "We're asking people to bring this crime out of the closet, out of the shadows."

There are key distinctions between smuggling, which involves a crime against a border, and trafficking, which involves a crime against a person, said Michael Renaud, a special agent with Homeland Security Investigations. Smuggling is transportation-based, while trafficking is exploitation-based, and smuggling is voluntary while trafficking is involuntary and involves force, fraud or coercion.

"Smuggling and trafficking can overlap," Renaud said, noting that people who are smuggled across the U.S.-Mexico border can become human trafficking victims when forced to work in order to pay their smuggling fee.

While the Hidalgo County District Attorney's office, which organized Thursday's event, does not have data on the prevalence of human trafficking in the Valley, nonprofit organizations cited the presence of trafficking in the agriculture and domestic labor sectors.

Seven to 12 percent of agriculture workers in the Valley show high indicators, or "red flags," of being trafficked, said Gonzalo Martinez de Vedia, a program manager with the Buffett-McCain Institute Initiative to Combat Modern Slavery, which focuses on human trafficking in Texas' agricultural sector.

"We hear people having their documents held from them until the season is over, threats of physical harm, or actual physical harm," Martinez de Vedia said.

Refugee Services of Texas, which provides services to trafficking survivors, has approximately 35 open cases in Hidalgo and Cameron counties, the majority of which involve labor trafficking.

"It's definitely happening," said Rachel Alvarez, trafficking senior programs manager for the organization. "It's very under-reported to law enforcement and there are still education gaps with law enforcement for it to be identified as trafficking."

The demand for cheap labor in the Valley encourages trafficking, she said, and RST receives referrals from immigration attorneys working with people who were trafficked while performing domestic labor, restaurant work or landscaping.

Renaud, of HSI, urges people to contact law enforcement if they see a situation that looks like trafficking, or an individual that could be a victim. The HSI tip line can be reached at (866) DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423).

"If you see something, say something," he said.

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22 Illegal Aliens Arrested In Identity Fraud Scheme, Stealing Thousands In Taxpayer Money

By Timothy Meads

[Townhall](#), July 29, 2018

The Department of Justice announced charges against 25 individuals on Friday who committed fraud using Puerto Rican identities in an effort to gain government benefits and in some cases even vote. 22 of the 25 charged were illegal aliens, many with records of drug dealing, violent crimes, and some previously deported.

Imposters regularly use birth certificates and social security cards stolen or copied from Puerto Ricans to pose as American citizens in order to receive Medicare, evade arrest, and take advantage of welfare benefits such as EBT cards and food stamps. In a sting operation known as, "Operation Double Trouble" the DOJ was able to nab 25 individuals who took advantage of poor oversight at Massachusetts' Registry of Motor Vehicles and steal people's identities.

"Across this city and across America, teachers, truck drivers, construction workers are going to work and paying taxes that are being stolen from the public treasury by

fraudsters and criminals,” Sessions said at a press conference held earlier this week

“These government programs are intended to help the poor, the elderly, American citizens. Not those that are trespassing in the country,” Sessions added. “This kind of fraud is a theft from our seniors, a theft from our taxpayers, and a theft from the needy, theft from America.”

Illegal aliens often use Puerto Rican identities because the Hispanic surnames are less likely to cause suspicion amongst the government than non-Hispanic surnames. Lapse oversight at the RMV then allows these individuals to gain numerous identities.

“What happens in Puerto Rico is that you have an influx of Dominican nationals who either purchase or steal identities belonging to Puerto Ricans, who are obviously U.S. citizens, so I think there’s still work to be done to shore up that area of enforcement,” U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said describing why many take advantage of Puerto Rican documents.

Among the illegal aliens arrested include, “Frank Lara, also known as Roberto Villegas, was a heroin and cocaine dealer in Boston. He had seven convictions, five Massachusetts licenses with different identities and 11 aliases. Lara was deported after we tracked him down. Rafael Nicolas Lopez Carrasco was a major heroin dealer arrested in Lawrence with 30 pounds of heroin. He had two driver’s licenses, three aliases and had been previously deported.”

As well as, “Juan Gonzalez was arrested with four pounds of heroin stashed in a mayonnaise jar. He is smiling on his state-issued EBT card given to him under the assumed identity of Alex Hernandez,” according to WCVB 5.

As for benefits gained, WCBV notes that “Federal court records show that 24 of the 25 obtained a driver’s license or state ID, 19 applied for MassHealth benefits, one received \$51,270 in rent subsidies from the Boston Housing Authorities and two pocketed more than \$25,000 in unemployment benefits. At least two registered to vote when they applied for their license or ID.”

Likewise, since these thieves are using real names, social security numbers, and birth certificates, actual American citizens are being harmed when they need help. As noted by the Boston Herald “one of the victims learned his problems were just beginning when he applied for a government housing subsidy after Hurricane Maria wiped out his house in Puerto Rico last fall, “and was told he was already receiving (public housing benefits) 1,600 miles away in Massachusetts.”

In total, the 25 scammers were able to steal more than \$200,000 in taxpayer dollars.

Corrections Officer Who Posted Ad Looking For Pedophile Mothers Pleads To Child Porn Charge

[NJ News](#), July 27, 2018

A former state Department of Corrections officer admitted in Newark federal court Friday to receiving images of child sexual abuse.

Stephen Salamak faces a maximum 20-year prison term and must register as a sex offender after he pleaded guilty to receipt of child pornography, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

The former East Jersey State Prison officer was arrested in October after an undercover investigator responded to a Craigslist ad posted by Salamak that sought to “connect with mothers who were ‘into perverted topics,’” according to a criminal complaint.

Salamak emailed with the undercover officer about a possible encounter with who he believed was the mother’s 8-year-old daughter, according to the complaint. The 38-year-old also made sexual comments related to the child.

Homeland Security Investigations agents searched Salamak’s personal email account, where they discovered a message with child pornography included, according to court filings.

Records show Salamak, of Lodi, worked as a senior corrections officer and earned an approximately \$61,900 salary.

Sentencing is set for Nov. 15.

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Massage Parlor Prostitution On The Rise In NH

By Todd Feathers

[New Hampshire Union Leader](#), July 29, 2018

EXETER – Word spread quickly online about the fate of Oakworks Therapy.

Within hours of federal agents descending on the unassuming, white house on Portsmouth Avenue – with its discreet backyard parking lot and garage renovated into the lobby of a massage parlor – people started posting on a forum about the business being shut down.

The website, one of several that help illegal businesses operate, says it facilitates “fantasy as it meets reality.” The U.S. Attorney’s office for New Hampshire described what was occurring inside Oakworks Therapy differently: prostitution.

On July 11, eight months after the raid, federal prosecutors indicted the owner, Ken D. Ma, for violating the Travel Act by using the internet to promote prostitution at his businesses, which also included massage parlors in Plaistow and Salem.

In a brief interview, Ma said the indictment was false.

In recent years, euphemistic advertisements for illicit massage businesses have become easy to find online, at websites like backpage.com, which has been shut down since the FBI seized it in April.

In New Hampshire, the proliferation of those advertisements corresponds with a change in the landscape of prostitution, federal prosecutors said. Prostitution rings, which often operated out of short-term lease apartments and moved frequently, increasingly seem to be opting for more formal settings.

"We've seen an uptick in those businesses opening," Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Zuckerman said. In the past, "you didn't have a business that was kind of hanging out a sign or filing papers with the Secretary of State ... it was more under the radar. But over the last few years, we've seen more businesses open as massage parlors."

There are now 27 massage parlors in New Hampshire listed on just one website.

They include Aqua Therapy in Londonderry, Asian Massage in Merrimack and Sunset Spa in Manchester.

Ma was the registered agent of Aqua Therapy until 2014, when it was transferred to Gui Hua Chen. Attempts to reach Chen were unsuccessful.

Asian Massage and Sunset Spa are registered to Bo Xuan Zhang, whom Merrimack police arrested in 2013 as a fugitive from New York, where the Brooklyn district attorney had indicted her on charges that included sex trafficking and promoting prostitution. A spokesman for the Brooklyn District Attorney's office said it did not have a record of Zhang being arraigned after her arrest in New Hampshire, and it is unclear if she was ever tried or convicted.

Attempts to reach her by phone and email were also unsuccessful.

Several local parlors listed on the illicit massage website are registered to owners with addresses and phone numbers in Brooklyn and Norwich, Conn., another sign that the industry is changing.

"I think we're in kind of a burgeoning market for that industry," Zuckerman said. "They're moving north from Boston and New York and looking to get a foothold in New Hampshire."

The illicit massage business is growing across the country, according to a January report from the Polaris Project, which works to counteract human trafficking and slavery. The nonprofit estimated that there are more than 9,000 of the businesses in the U.S., generating more than \$2.5 billion in annual revenue.

Individual parlors are often part of larger networks that also control the trafficking, transportation and housing of the women involved. The Polaris Project reported that victims tend to be women in their mid-30s to 50s from China and South Korea.

That meshes with what advocates in New Hampshire have seen. Unlike other forms of sex trafficking in the Granite State, women involved in the illicit massage parlor business are mostly from China but are legal residents of the U.S.,

according to Rebecca Ayling, project director of the New Hampshire Human Trafficking Collaborative Task Force.

"There haven't been a lot of people coming forward" as trafficking victims in New Hampshire's massage industry, she said. "There are a lot of different reasons, but traffickers are really clever and strategic. They spend a lot of the time giving people reasons why they shouldn't report the crime."

That can include confiscating their identification documents, moving them often among locations and threatening to hurt their families.

Investigators monitor massage advertisement websites and keep tabs on the businesses listed there, said Manchester detective Eric Tracy, who is the department's human trafficking task force officer. But the advertisements alone are not enough evidence to shut down a business or arrest the owners.

"We're victim-centered; that's the approach we take," he said. "We're trying to focus on how we get into these buildings to speak to the women and get them help."

Often, massage parlor workers don't want to discuss their treatment. The task force, which is funded by \$1.3 million in grants, provides translation services and helps connect victims who do want help with housing, transportation and other services.

From January 2017 to March 2018, the task force provided services to 24 trafficking victims, according to data obtained through a Right-to-Know request. Law enforcement agencies participating in the task force also opened 39 new human trafficking investigations, arrested 19 people and secured six indictments.

Child Exploitation Operation Nets Five Arrests

[Hood River \(OR\) News](#), July 28, 2018

On July 17, Hood River County Sheriff's Office and Portland FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force conducted a joint operation with assistance from the Columbia Gorge Major Crimes Team and Hood River County District Attorney's Office to identify and apprehend individuals seeking to commit sexual acts with minor children.

The operation resulted in the arrest of five males ranging in age from 16 to 44 years of age. All suspects were lodged at NORCOR.

Arrested were Brandon David Backman, 44, Hood River, online sexual corruption of a child in the first degree; Francisco Ramirez Rendon, 27, The Dalles, online sexual corruption of a child in the first degree; John Grover Morgan III, 30, Rhododendron, online sexual corruption of a child in the first degree and luring a minor; Daniel Garcia, 23, The Dalles, online sexual corruption of a child in the first degree and luring a minor; and a juvenile male, 16, White Salmon (name withheld per ORS 419A.255), attempted sodomy in the first degree.

Online sexual corruption in the first degree (ORS 163.433) is a Class B felony in Oregon and requires that a person knowingly uses an online communication to solicit a child to engage in sexual contact or sexually explicit conduct and intentionally takes a substantial step toward physically meeting with or encountering a child.

Portland FBI's Child Exploitation Task Force (CETF) consists of FBI agents and task force officers from the Beaverton Police Department, the Portland Police Bureau, the Tigard Police Department, the Hillsboro Police Department and the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

The FBI's CETF is committed to locating and arresting those who prey on children, as well as recovering underage victims of sex trafficking and child pornography, said a sheriff's office press release.

The Columbia Gorge Major Crime's Team includes detectives from The Oregon State Police, The Dalles Police Department, Wasco County Sheriff's Office, Hood River Police Department and Hood River County Sheriff's Office.

SECRET SERVICE

Police Say 'Suspicious Item' At Trump Tower Deemed Safe

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

NEW YORK (AP) — Police say suspicious items found inside Trump Tower have been determined to be harmless.

The New York Police Department's counterterrorism chief, James Waters, said Friday on Twitter that packages found in the building "have been deemed safe" by the department's bomb squad.

The president's son, Eric Trump, tweeted that the items "turned out being USB chargers but always better to be safe than sorry."

An officer at President Donald Trump's high-rise first noticed a suspicious item at about 4:30 p.m.

Fifth Avenue was closed on the block in front of the skyscraper while police investigated.

The Republican president was not in New York on Friday.

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Counterfeit Money Hits Prescott Area

By Max Efrein

[Prescott \(AZ\) Daily Courier](#), July 28, 2018

In June, several businesses in Prescott and surrounding areas reported receiving counterfeit money in exchange for goods and services.

Zeke's Eatin' Place, located in the Frontier Village Center off of Highway 69, was one of those businesses.

Co-owner Tracey Williams remembers the incident well. Two customers had come in to eat. As soon they finished their meal, they placed two counterfeit \$20 bills on the tray with their check, said "thanks," and walked out before the waitress could check if they paid appropriately.

"When the server went back over to pick up the tray, she looked at it, went to me and said 'this isn't real, this isn't real,'" Williams said.

The money was clearly fake, she said.

"Look wise, if you walked by it you wouldn't be able to tell, but as soon as you touched it, you knew it wasn't money," Williams said. "It was really smooth. The paper wasn't right at all. It was nothing like real money."

By the time they knew what had happened, the scammers had already driven away. Williams reported it to the Yavapai-Prescott Tribal Police and provided a description of the suspects.

"They were covered in tattoos," Williams said. "And the man was bald."

She then called her bank to tell them about it, but found out that banks do not compensate its customers for this form of fraud.

"Sucks to be you at that point," she said. "We just told the girls, 'you need to keep your eyes peeled. When someone gets up to go, if you haven't gone over to check, you need to make sure [the money] is there or whatever.'"

PRESCOTT CASES

Though it's unclear whether the cases are related to what happened at Zeke's, the Prescott Police Department (PPD) is also investigating a couple of situations involving the passing and possession of forged \$20 bills in June, said PPD officials.

"Our cases involved several hundred dollars in counterfeit bills that were used by three individuals," said Deputy Chief Amy Bonney.

The businesses targeted were Wal-Mart and SWC Prescott Dispensary, a medical marijuana dispensary.

In the Wal-Mart cases, the bills were identified as fake because identical serial numbers were used on numerous bills. In the dispensary case, there were multiple identifiers. "The ink was different from valid bills, the lack of a security stripe and a security pen was used," said PPD spokesperson David Fuller.

Two of the suspects allegedly connected to these cases were Robert Van Gundy and Ashley Zimmerman. Both were arrested, but detectives are still trying to determine the nature of their involvement and how they came into possession of the counterfeit bills, Bonney said. A third suspect has yet to be identified or found, so the investigation is ongoing.

The counterfeit activity appeared to die down for several weeks until a fake \$10 bill was passed at a McDonald's in Prescott Wednesday, July 25.

Though the McDonald's cashier suspected the bill was fake, she was unsure whether or not to confront the customer about it, so she chose to look further at the bill later on, Fuller said.

Fuller said it's too early in the investigation of the McDonald's case to speculate if it was in any way connected to the other cases in June.

"What you often see with these type of things is that it sort of floods the market for a very short period of time," Fuller said. "People make a bunch of counterfeit bills and then go out and use them, so we have kind of a rash of bills turned into us, and then it kind of lulls, because those bills go out of circulation."

HOW TO TELL REAL FROM FAKE

The counterfeiting of legal tender is a problem that has plagued both governments and consumers for centuries.

As criminals have devised new and more elaborate ways to break the law, the United States Federal Reserve, the central bank of the United States, has added more and more security measures to help identify the real from the fake.

The best way to determine whether a bill is genuine is to rely on the security features placed into bills of \$5 denomination or higher, according to the Federal Reserve. These include watermarks and security threads.

Though counterfeit detection pens are a cheap way to check bills, they're not always the most accurate, according to the Federal Reserve's website. These pens check whether the bills are made of wood-based paper or fiber-based paper. U.S. paper currency is made up of 75 percent cotton and 25 percent linen, according to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. So if a bill is made of wood-based paper, the pen shows black on the bill — proving it's fake. If the bill is made of fiber-based paper, then no discoloration occurs. Though some counterfeit bills are simply printed on regular paper, more sophisticated counterfeit operations use fabric-based bills, negating the effectiveness of security pens.

Watermarks in U.S. paper currency are much more difficult to fabricate and can simply be seen by holding bills up to a light source. Security threads also change colors under ultraviolet lights, so having an ultraviolet lamp near a cash register is an easy way to check if a bill is genuine. Bills \$5 or more change different colors, so it's useful to know what color is associated with each bill, according to the United States Secret Service.

For more information on how to authenticate money, go to www.uscurrency.gov. What to do if you suspect a counterfeit

For your personal safety, the United States Secret Service recommends taking the following actions when presented with a bill that may be counterfeit:

- Do not put yourself in danger.
- If possible, do not return the bill to the passer.

- Delay the passer with some excuse, if possible.
- Observe the passer's description — and their companions' descriptions — and write down their vehicle license plate numbers if you can.
- Contact the local police department or call the U.S. Secret Service office.
- Write your initials and date in the white border area of the suspected counterfeit note.
- Do not handle the counterfeit note. Place it inside a protective cover, a plastic bag, or envelope to protect it until you place it in the hands of an identified law enforcement officer or Secret Service agent.

The Prescott Police Department can be reached at 928-777-1900; Prescott Valley Police, 928-772-9261; Chino Valley Police, 928-636-4223; Yavapai County Sheriff's Office, 928-771-3260.

The Secret Service can be reached at 202-406-5708.

Information provided by the U.S. Secret Service.

Fighter Jets Roar Over Lehigh Valley After Trump's Air Space Is Violated

[Lehigh Valley \(PA\) Express Times](#), July 28, 2018

With a roar that could have been mistaken for thunder, given the weather of late, fighter jets were seen flying below the cloud cover Saturday morning over the Lehigh Valley.

President Donald Trump is spending the weekend at his Bedminster golf club, his fourth trip to New Jersey in five weeks.

"This morning an aircraft violated the temporary flight restriction near Bedminster, New Jersey," U.S. Secret Service spokeswoman Julia McMurray said. "Military aircraft were launched and the pilot diverted his course without incident."

The Lehigh Valley is on the western edge of the 30-nautical-mile restricted-flight zone around Bedminster, the Federal Aviation Administration shows on its website. Those temporary flight restrictions began at 5 p.m. Friday and continue through 6:30 p.m. Sunday.

Aircraft may take off and land within that zone, but with only with prior approval. This weekend's QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning, for example, is occurring about six miles from the Trump National Golf Club.

The festival continues Sunday at Solberg Airport in Readington Township, Hunterdon County. Balloon launches are also planned during the Balloon Festival at the Warren County Farmers' Fair that began Saturday and continues through Aug. 4.

The fighter jets were seen about 11 a.m. following a loop that extended over Northampton and Bucks counties.

There was no need for the military jets to intercept the aircraft, said U.S. Air Force Major Mark Lazane, public affairs officer for North American Aerospace Defense Command.

McMurray and Lazane both deferred to the FAA for further information on the air-space violation. An FAA spokesman declined to comment Saturday.

The fighter jets weren't doing any maneuvers out of Lehigh Valley International Airport, confirmed Colin Riccobon, spokesman for the owner, the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority.

An Air Force fighter jet did intercept a small, general aviation plane July 21 that had entered the TFR zone near Trump's private club, according to a report on marketwatch.com. Authorities met with the pilot upon landing at Sky Manor airport in Pittstown, Hunterdon County, and deemed the incident a non-threat, according to the report, citing a White House spokeswoman.

More flight restrictions are in store Aug. 2-13 around Bedminster, nj.com reports, suggesting a return by Trump.

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US Secret Service, SBI, Local Law Enforcement Arrest Multiple People In Greensboro Robberies

[WGHP-TV Greensboro \(NC\)](#), July 27, 2018

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Greensboro police announced officials made multiple arrests Friday morning in connection with a number of commercial robberies in Greensboro and surrounding areas.

The Greensboro Police Department, Guilford County Sheriff's Department, North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and the United States Secret Service made the arrests at about 7 a.m. Friday morning.

Five people are currently detained. Four of them have been identified as 18-year-old Kalil Barrino, 18-year-old Jelani Dye, 20-year-old Jaelyn Crowder and 19-year-old Christian Sarpy.

Police said the arrests relate to robberies at several CVS and Walgreens stores in Greensboro and multiple offenses across the state.

The suspect all face charges of robbery with a dangerous weapon in cities including Greensboro, Winston Salem, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Mooresville and Matthews.

Authorities made the Friday morning arrests at three Greensboro locations: 905-C Shelby Drive, 4228-A Edith Lane and 4304 Big Tree Way.

Anyone with any information call Crime Stoppers at (336) 373-1000 or text "badboyz" and the tip to 274637. Callers can remain anonymous and may be eligible for a reward.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

FEMA 'Cat Bond' Opens Wall Street To Flood Risk

By KatherineBlunt

[Houston Chronicle](#), July 27, 2018

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is taking an unprecedented step to expand private involvement in its flood insurance program by offloading risk to investors, a move that could portend long-term increases in premiums for homes in Houston and other flood-prone areas where devastating storms have exposed the extent of the program's debt and dysfunction.

The agency is soon expected to issue the National Flood Insurance Program's first-ever catastrophe bond, a means of reinsurance offered by risk-savvy investors willing to bet on the probability of extreme calamities in exchange for above-market returns. The bond could provide as much as \$500 million to cover flood claims after tropical storms or massive hurricanes like Harvey and Katrina — if the damage surpasses a high threshold.

For Wall Street, the deal is a long-awaited opportunity to cash in on devastating flooding, a sort of peril that has until recently been deemed too unpredictable even for a market that thrives on risk. Investor interest intensified last August during Harvey, when fund managers around the world watched Houston drown under 51 inches of rainfall and realized that, with sophisticated probability models, flood risk could be the cat bond market's next frontier.

For the flood insurance program, faced with mounting debt and the threat of fiercer storms feeding on warming oceans, the deal is part of a broader push toward privatization to relieve a balance sheet burdened with some \$20 billion in debt. The program, up for congressional reauthorization at the end of the month, has burned through about \$42 billion in taxpayer-funded bailouts in the last 25 years, a Chronicle investigation found. Its capacity to borrow from the U.S. Treasury is capped at roughly \$30 billion.

David Maurstad, who oversees the flood insurance program in his role as FEMA's deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation, said the cat bond deal will strengthen the flood program's reinsurance coverage by providing another layer of protection the event of catastrophic loss. The agency purchased traditional reinsurance for the first time in 2017, essentially insuring itself against major flood losses as part of an ongoing plan to shift risk to the private market.

Investors and industry experts anticipate that expansion of private involvement in the program will eventually require FEMA to raise premiums and curtail its ability to subsidize them, particularly for homes built in flood plains ill-suited for safe development. Sooner or later, they say, the agency will

have to take in more money in order to purchase reinsurance because the private market charges rates that reflect the cost of risk.

"If you hand reinsurers your losses, your rates have to go up," said Craig Poulton, CEO of Poulton Associates, one of the country's largest administrators of private flood insurance. "The cost of reinsurance is dramatically higher than borrowing from the federal government."

FEMA said earlier this year that its initial reinsurance purchases — small relative to the size of the program — will not directly affect rates for flood insurance. Maurstad added that it's too soon to say how the agency will pay for additional coverage.

"We don't know the answer to that right now," he said. "That's part of the give-and-take that will have to occur in the discussions with the Administration and Congress in terms of how to support the overall framework of the NFIP."

Rates are already rising. Average premiums will increase about 8 percent this year in line with legislative mandates, and FEMA is working to improve its risk assessment methods to better align insurance rates with the cost of coverage.

The push toward privatization changes the very essence of the program, established in 1968 as a government-supported means of offering flood insurance when private companies deemed it too risky to do so. Now, advances in catastrophe modeling and new ways to monetize risk have renewed private interest in backing those policies.

Lixin Zeng, CEO of AlphaCat Managers, a Bermuda-based firm that invests in cat bonds and other reinsurance products, said investors have in recent years shown growing interest in taking on flood risk for either FEMA or private insurers, potentially extending their ability to pay claims and write new coverage.

Hurricane Harvey, he added, reinforced that interest by exposing both the costs of catastrophic flood damage and the extent of uninsured losses in the wake of major rainfall or storm surges.

"The private market is prepared to take on flood risk," he said. "As long as we, the managers, critically analyze and price the risk, investors will have no problem insuring it."

Cat bonds occupy an obscure corner of the market that developed in the wake of Hurricane Andrew, the 1992 storm that destroyed more than \$15 billion in insured property and led to the bankruptcy of 11 insurance companies.

Using complex risk analysis, investors have for years been betting on nature's whims with bonds that help shield insurers against extreme losses caused by hurricanes, earthquakes, windstorms, cyclones and other phenomena with the potential to inflict billions of dollars in damage.

The market is dominated by private insurance and reinsurance companies that sell the bonds to investors whose principal is kept in escrow for a certain time frame, typically

three years. The insurers pay investors a relatively high rate of interest during the life of the bond — unless a specified disaster strikes and exceeds a predefined threshold based on metrics such as storm strength or total insurance claims. In that case, the principal is liquidated in part or in full to pay the insurer.

For investors, it's a gamble, but one with good odds. A cat bond is carefully structured so that its threshold hews to a narrow set of conditions, making a full payout of the principal relatively improbable.

For insurers, it's a guaranteed source of cash if the worst comes to pass — but only if the disaster crosses that narrow threshold. When Harvey churned through the Gulf, for example, its central pressure narrowly missed the measurement required to trigger a partial payout of a cat bond issued by the Mexican government to provide coverage for earthquakes and hurricanes.

Days later, an earthquake off the coast of Chiapas proved strong enough to trigger part of that same bond, prompting a \$150 million payment from investors.

FEMA decline to comment on the specifics of its cat bond deal, which is expected to close in the coming days.

London-based industry researcher Artemis, drawing on documents provided by insiders, reported that the agency, through German reinsurer Hannover Re, will issue a three-year cat bond investors willing to shoulder flood risk exclusively. That type of deal has never been offered in the market.

Unlike hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters, flood risk has historically been difficult to model because a wide range of factors, from topography to tide patterns, can influence its severity.

The bond will offer two classes of notes, each different levels of risk.

The first set of notes will provide as much as \$325 million in coverage when a single hurricane or tropical storm causes between \$7.5 billion and \$10 billion in flood claims. Risk models say there's roughly a 6 percent chance investors will lose some money on the deal; in exchange for that bet, they can expect a return just over 11 percent — well above rates for high-yield corporate bonds.

The second set will provide as much as \$175 million in coverage when the same sort of event costs the program between \$5 billion and \$10 billion in claims. That's a riskier proposition: The estimated chance of loss approaches 10 percent. Returns, though, could top 13 percent.

Dirk Schmelzer, senior portfolio manager for Plenum Investments in Zurich, had a chance to analyze the deal during a presentation held as part of a "road show" for potential investors. Such presentations typically last about an hour and a half, Schmelzer said, but this one lasted twice that long as FEMA representatives explained the deal and fielded questions.

"Market reception has been positive," Schmelzer said. "Investors so far are quite optimistic that the NFIP will come back and expand the coverage."

The flood insurance program has for years run at a loss following a succession of storms that cost billions of dollars in claims. A Congressional Budget Office report last year pegged the program's annual shortfall at \$1.4 billion largely because premiums collected in coastal counties — which account for roughly three quarters of its five million policies — fall far short of expected annual costs.

In Harris County, where rampant development has turned wide swaths of the region's flood plains into subdivisions, that shortfall tops \$10 million.

The program first tapped the private market last year when it purchased traditional reinsurance, paying a \$150 million premium for just over \$1 billion in coverage. That policy paid out in full in the wake of Hurricane Harvey to cover about an eighth of some \$8 billion in claims, and the program upped its reinsurance coverage to \$1.4 billion this year.

The cat bond will add an additional layer to that protection, providing money to flood claims once the damage is tallied. The deal was initially valued at \$275 million, Artemis reported, but investor interest spurred FEMA to increase it to \$500 million.

"The market is ready to support much greater transfer of flood risks," Artemis owner Steve Evans said. "This is really just evidence of the sophistication of that investor base."

FEMA's cat bond issuance will follow a banner year for a market that has grown 15 percent to \$28 billion since last year's spate of storms and disasters, according to Chicago-based Elementum Advisors. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, combined with earthquakes in Mexico and wildfires in California, caused at least 16 cat bonds to pay about \$750 million to insurers last year, the firm reported, the highest annual payout in the history of the market.

Rather than cause a mass sell-off, the disasters invigorated a market that hadn't been seriously tested since 2012, when Hurricane Sandy caused catastrophic damage in New York and New Jersey. When last year's storms triggered massive payouts, investors anticipated that rates of return would increase and have since flooded the market with capital.

"The storms last year validated the role that cat bonds can play in providing reinsurance," said John DeCaro, founding principal and portfolio manager at Elementum. "The market has a strong appetite for new risk."

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FEMA's New Guide For Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks

By Tammy Waitt

[American Security Today](#), July 29, 2018

The National Incident Management System is intended to be used by the whole community. The intended audience for this page is individuals, families, communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. If you have any questions, please contact the National Integration Center at FEMA-NIC@fema.dhs.gov.

Planning makes it possible to manage the entire life cycle of a potential crisis. Strategic and operational planning establishes priorities, identifies expected levels of performance and capability requirements, provides the standard for assessing capabilities and helps stakeholders learn their roles. The planning elements identify what an organization's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) should include for ensuring that contingencies are in place for delivering the capability during a large-scale disaster. FBI Jacksonville SWAT team operators during a complex attack training exercise before the The Avenues mall opened on May 4, 2014. (Courtesy of the FBI) National Planning Frameworks The National Planning Frameworks, which are part of the National Preparedness System, set the strategy and doctrine for building, sustaining, and delivering the core capabilities identified in the National Preparedness Goal. They describe the coordinating structures and alignment of key roles and responsibilities for the whole community and are integrated to ensure interoperability across all mission areas. The frameworks address the roles of:

Individuals

Nonprofit entities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)

The private sector

Communities

Critical infrastructure

Governments, and

The nation as a whole For more information on the National Preparedness Goal, the National Preparedness System, and National Planning Frameworks, please visit the National Preparedness Resource Library.

Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101 provides guidance on the fundamentals of planning and development of Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). Following the initial release of CPG 101 in March 2009, FEMA solicited additional input from private sector, local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal stakeholders, which led to the development of a more user-friendly document that reflects recent initiatives and the current planning environment. CPG 101 encourages emergency and homeland security managers to engage the whole community in addressing all of the risks that might impact their jurisdictions. CPG 101 is the cornerstone for providing planning considerations for a variety

of hazards, security issues and emergency functions. Supplements to 101 will be issued as needed to expand on aspects of the guidance.

Plan Analysis Tool: The Plan Analysis Tool supplements CPG 101 by providing a one-page matrix to track the development timeline for a new plan or the revision of an existing plan.

The tool also captures the planning elements contained in CPG 101 to support the analysis by a jurisdiction of its existing plans. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 201 FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201, Third Edition provides guidance for conducting a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (SPR), formerly State Preparedness Report. CPG 201, Third Edition expands to include both the THIRA and SPR because they are interconnected processes that, together, communities use to evaluate their preparedness. This Edition also introduces updates to both methodologies. The updated THIRA adopts standardized language to describe impacts and targets and allows communities to collect more specific, quantitative information while also providing important context. Where appropriate, this Edition highlights key changes from previous editions of CPG 201. This Third Edition supersedes the Second Edition of CPG 201. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 502 FEMA's Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 502, Considerations for Fusion Center and Emergency Operations Center Coordination focuses on the critical partnership and the exchange of information between fusion centers and Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs). The guide does not provide a "one-size fits all" approach to fusion center and EOC coordination. Rather, it outlines the information sharing roles of fusion centers and EOCs while identifying the planning and coordination considerations each entity must take into account. This guide outlines considerations for the following as they pertain to fusion centers and EOCs: Familiarization with Capabilities, Needs and Requirements, Establishing Partnerships, Determining Processes and Training, Workshops and Exercises. Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for Emergency Managers Faith-based and community organizations offer a wide variety of human and material resources that can prove invaluable during and after an incident. Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for Emergency Managers guide provides a methodology for emergency managers to engage with faith-based and community organizations in enhancing the resiliency of our nation. By building partnerships with these groups, emergency managers can provide training and technical assistance to strengthen their skills, connect them with existing partners, and then integrate them into emergency management plans and exercises before an event occurs

thus increasing response and recovery capability. Courtesy of Wikipedia

Planning Considerations: Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks Complex coordinated terrorist attacks represent an evolving and dynamic terrorist threat with the potential for mass casualties and infrastructure damage anywhere and at any time. Planning Considerations: Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks is a resource to aid all community partners, to include all levels of government, infrastructure owners and operators, small businesses, non-profit organizations, and volunteer organizations, in planning and preparing for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack (CCTA) scenarios. The guide includes the unique characteristics of CCTAs, identifies potential challenges, and discusses the six-step planning process as it relates to CCTAs. The guide also provides information on identifying the capabilities necessary to respond to CCTAs using the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, and it includes a list of relevant, available resources. Developing High Quality Emergency Operation Plans for Houses of Worship The Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship provides recommendations in the development of plans to respond to an emergency and outlines how organizations can plan for preventing, protecting against, mitigating the impact of and recovering from these emergencies. The guide translates lessons learned from the administration's work on national preparedness to the school and house of worship contexts, ensuring that these critical assets are benefitting from recent advancements in the emergency planning field.

The guide introduces houses of worship to a new approach to planning that includes walking through different emergency scenarios to create a course of action for each objective the team is trying to accomplish. The guide emphasizes that successful planning requires all stakeholders be engaged in the planning process from the start – including community partners such as local law enforcement, fire officials, emergency medical services and emergency management staff.

Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plan The Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plan provides recommendations in the development of plans not only to respond to an emergency but, also, outlines how schools (K-12) can plan for preventing, protecting against, mitigating the impact of and recovering from these emergencies. The guide translates lessons learned from the administration's work on national preparedness to benefit from recent advancements in the emergency planning field. The guide introduces new approaches to planning that includes walking through different emergency scenarios to create a course of action for each objective the team is trying to accomplish. Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for

Institutions of Higher Education The Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Institutions of Higher Education provides recommendations in the development of plans not only to respond to an emergency but, also, outlines how institutions of higher education can plan for preventing, protecting against, mitigating the impact of, and recovering from these emergencies. The guide translates lessons learned from the administration's work on national preparedness to institutions of higher education to benefit from recent advancements in the emergency planning field. The guide introduces new approaches to planning that include walking through different emergency scenarios to create a course of action for each objective the team is trying to accomplish. Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for State Governments The Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for State Governments supports state agencies with guidance needed to develop broad scope recovery plans that address National Disaster Recovery Framework principles. A robust recovery plan can enable states to more easily adapt to new post-disaster roles needed to manage new or modified sources of state and federal recovery resources. Pre-disaster recovery plans are important because they establish resilience through state-level leadership and structure, form key communication channels, and build whole-community partnerships to support recovery efforts. Using this guide to develop state capability will not only allow your state or territory to be more effective in recovery, but it will help you better communicate and interface with your federal and local recovery partners. Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments The Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments is designed to help local governments prepare for recovery from future disasters. The Guide offers tools for public engagement, whole-community recovery, identification of existing recovery resources, and identifying outside partnerships that can help local governments build resilience.

COAST GUARD

Off-duty Coast Guard Officer Rescues 2 Swimmers Off Fire Island, Officials Say

By Sabrina Escobar

[Newsday \(NY\)](#), July 27, 2018

An off-duty Coast Guard officer rescued two men swimming off the coast of Fire Island Tuesday night, officials said.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Victoria Vanderhaden, an active duty Coast Guard member at Station Eatons Neck, was walking on the beach near the Fire Island Lighthouse about 8:45 p.m. when she noticed two people swimming beyond the wave break, officials said. At the time, there were winds

between 20 and 30 mph, and the waves were up to six feet, they said.

Vanderhaden, who lives in Patchogue and has only been stationed on Long Island for a couple of months, said the ocean looked like a washing machine.

"I personally would not have been out there," she said.

The men were most likely unable to return to shore because they were caught by a rip current and affected by the weather conditions, said Coast Guard spokesman Lt. j.g. Rodion Mazin.

Vanderhaden, 21, watched the people in the water slowly get pulled away from the shore for 10 minutes before realizing they were in distress. A bystander also explained to her that they were calling for help in Spanish, she said. When she noticed there were no lifeguards on duty, she took action.

Vanderhaden, who was a lifeguard in Florida, where she lived previously, told a bystander to call 911 and the Coast Guard before diving into the water to help.

"Once I realized how much danger they were in, I knew I had to act fast," Vanderhaden said in a statement.

She swam first to the man farthest away, who was about 50 yards offshore, helping him stay afloat and pushing him from behind toward the other man, officials said. She then guided both men to shore, instructing them to swim parallel to the coast to avoid the rip current.

During their swim, Vanderhaden said she kept trying to calm the men down.

"Halfway through, I was kind of struggling myself and I was like 'Oh great, I'm creating a third drowning victim here,'" she said.

The three swimmers got to shore 30 minutes later, where paramedics and New York State Parks police officers ensured their well-being. The two men thanked Vanderhaden profusely, she said.

"It was exhausting, but definitely worth it," she said. "I know other people would have done the same thing."

Duck Boat Investigators Describe Video Of Run-up To Deadly Storm And Sinking

By Michael Laris

[Philly \(PA\)](#), July 28, 2018

Shortly before their fatal voyage, the crew of the duck boat that sank last week in Missouri was told to head out on the water before taking their passengers on their road tour around the scenic Ozark Mountains, according to video and audio recordings retrieved from the vessel by federal investigators.

Within two minutes of that instruction by an individual who stepped briefly onto the boat, and as passengers were boarding, the Ride the Ducks captain "made a verbal reference to looking at the weather radar prior to the trip,"

according to timeline released by the National Transportation Safety Board.

Once the captain headed out onto Table Rock Lake, the vessel encountered a sudden change of weather. Soon after, a tone sounded on one of the vessel's key safety systems, known as a bilge alarm, according to the NTSB. Such systems are meant to provide warnings if water is coming into the vessel.

The captain flipped off the alarm, made a radio call that the NTSB said remains unintelligible on the recording, and then the alarm sounded again.

The NTSB, working with the Coast Guard, the National Weather Service, Missouri authorities and Ride the Ducks Branson, the tour operator, is continuing to investigate the cause of the accident on the amphibious DUKW "Stretch Boat 7," which killed one crew member and 16 passengers. The video information, including time stamps, remains preliminary, and no cause has been determined, the agency said.

But the preliminary NTSB account raises new questions as investigators seek to figure out whether there were problems with the vehicle itself, with its maintenance, with the decision making by company and crew, or with oversight of government officials.

Citing the ongoing investigation, a spokeswoman for Ripley Entertainment, which bought Ride the Ducks Branson last year, declined to answer questions, including about whether the video showed that the tour operator was trying to beat the oncoming bad weather or had otherwise taken too many risks.

The duck boat industry uses a mix of replicas made within the past two decades and refurbished military vessels, including some from WWII. That lack of uniformity poses challenges for oversight, which is supposed to be overseen by the Coast Guard.

The replicas were meant to eliminate some of the safety problems that came when military vehicles were retrofitted for tourists. But questions have been raised about the rigor of their design and what such vessels can withstand. In Branson, the company says it was running replicas in its operations.

The weather turned treacherous quickly for Stretch Boat 7.

At about 6:50 p.m., the captain briefed passengers on the location of the life jackets and life rings, according to the NTSB timeline.

At about 6:55, the captain told passengers they were about to enter the water, and then they did. "The water appeared calm at this time," according to the NTSB.

For the next four minutes, the captain let four children sit in the driver's seat, "while he observed and assisted," according to the NTSB.

The Ride the Ducks website offers passengers a chance to drive the vessel.

"Join in on the fun as you quack along with the captain and dance to the music. When we are on the lake, drive the Duck, if you want," according to the site.

At 7:00 p.m., according to the NTSB, "whitecaps rapidly appeared on the water and winds increased." The inward facing video cut off 8 minutes later. And soon the vessel sank.

After 30 Years, She's Turning In Her Keys To The Montauk Lighthouse

By Arielle Dollinger

[New York Times](#), July 29, 2018

MONTAUK, N.Y. — For Margaret A. Winski, living in the lighthouse here was a childhood dream realized.

From the tower, she saw three decades of autumns characterized by water "boiling" with schools of fish and fishermen shoulder-to-shoulder along the shoreline. She stood in the lantern room of the Montauk Lighthouse as snow swirled around her during Long Island's powerful winter storms.

"It's like being in a snow globe," she said on the couch in her apartment with her 120-pound Newfoundland dog, Kate Weber, at her feet.

She spent the summers welcoming thousands of visitors from around the world to the place she called home.

But now, after 31 years, Ms. Winski is moving to Maine.

"When you turn 60," said Ms. Winski, 62, "something snaps in your head." She said she realized she did not have time to waste, and had wanted to live in Maine for years.

Lighthouse keepers of old were survivalists — hunters, farmers, fishermen living with limited supplies and no modern conveniences. They would tend the light and maintain the fog horn, said Jeff Gales, the executive director of the U.S. Lighthouse Society. But the traditional "lighthouse keeper" role no longer exists, he said.

The Montauk Lighthouse, built in 1796, was commissioned by President George Washington as one of the first public works projects in the United States. It is the fourth oldest lighthouse in continuous operation in the country and is a National Historic Landmark and popular tourist destination, said Henry Osmer, 68, the assistant director of the lighthouse and its historian. The lighthouse's light flashes every five seconds and its foghorn sounds two seconds of every 15 seconds, he said.

On April 1, 1987, the U.S. Coast Guard moved out of the Montauk Lighthouse, having automated the light and foghorn and turned it over to the Montauk Historical Society.

That night, Ms. Winski moved in as a resident in exchange for her presence at night. She would also handle the money from ticket and gift shop sales.

Ms. Winski would watch lightening storms from the front porch, read profusely, and listen to the radio. Five years in, she would get a television.

"I'm a solitary person," she said. "A lot of people would go out of their minds, I think."

Ms. Winski's family moved from Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., to Montauk when she was 12 and she imagined living in a lighthouse somewhere, someday. She considered joining the Coast Guard for that reason.

"I went for the interview and they said, 'Why do you want to join the Coast Guard?' And I said, 'I want to live in a lighthouse,'" she recalled. "They said, 'Forget it, you'll never live in a lighthouse.'"

When she learned of the lighthouse vacancy, she wrote a proposal that earned her the residency. When she could not be there at night, she had a friend stay over.

With a place to live but no income, Ms. Winski got a day job with the Postal Service and worked for 30 years at the local post office, which she calls "the heart of the town."

At the lighthouse, she has been first on the scene of ship wrecks and the one to inform gate jumpers carrying suitcases that, no, they could not spend the night.

"Every nut ends up at Montauk Point," Ms. Winski said.

Once, about a decade ago, a car drove up behind her. Normally, she would turn after-hours visitors away, but there was "something about these people."

She invited the group in for a tour and up the 137 steps to the tower. It was the actress Nicole Kidman; the singer Keith Urban, her husband; and Ingrid Sischy, the Vanity Fair writer and critic. Leslee Dart, whose public relations firm represents Ms. Kidman, confirmed the outing.

"I sort of knew who she was, but had no idea who he was," Ms. Winski said. "He's like, 'Hi, I'm Keith.' I'm like, 'Good. I'm Marge.'"

She searched for him online after he left.

Ms. Winski, known as Marge, had become a lighthouse fixture. Mr. Osmer said, "Having Marge here was like having a well-fitting glove. It was just comfortable."

When Joseph Gaviola learned that Ms. Winski was moving out, he volunteered to move in. Mr. Gaviola, 63, a Montauk businessman and member of the lighthouse board, grew up on Long Island.

"I look at it as an adventure; but, on the other hand, we have a National Historic Landmark, and we want and require somebody to be in attendance there," Mr. Gaviola said.

He plans to renovate the living space, he said, in part to create more closet space for his suits.

"It's going to be a learning curve for a while," he said, of living in a public space. He is prepared.

"It can be rough, lonely, isolated, a little scary at times, I'm sure," Mr. Gaviola said. "On the other hand, it's a utopian place. It's, you know, historic, and you can't think of a better view."

Ms. Winski plans to write a book about living in the lighthouse.

She will miss the whistles of Scoters at night and being "surrounded by such beauty on a grand scale." But she will not miss the drones that have hovered outside her window at every sunrise and sunset for the past five years.

CYBER NEWS

Rather Than Chasing Threats, Homeland Security Dives Into Risk

By Amanda Ziadeh

[GovernmentCIO](#), July 29, 2018

Election infrastructure became officially recognized as a critical infrastructure subsector in 2017, and the Homeland Security Department has been working with federal, state and local partners to bolster information sharing and provide the resources needed to secure election systems and plan for response.

Election integrity is just one of the many topics Christopher Krebs, DHS undersecretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate, talks about on the inaugural episode of CyberCast.

"I've spent a lot of time over the last year or so focused on the election security issue," he tells podcast hosts Kiersten Todt and Roger Cressey. "The interesting thing about the way elections are run in the U.S. . . . it falls to the responsibility of state and local governments to administer and execute even national elections."

That's close to 10,000 election jurisdictions nationally, Krebs says. From a broader IT security perspective, state and local governments are not necessarily resourced on an annual basis for equipment refreshes, like upgrading licensing for operating systems or platforms. So, Krebs says DHS works to provide intelligence and information sharing, technical services, and instant response planning and exercises.

And part of the technical services is risk and vulnerability assessments.

"RVA is one of the topshelf offerings we provide," Krebs says. It involves penetration testing and proper configuration evaluations in order to deploy the proper security footing. And what those RVA assessments are showing is basic cybersecurity hygiene needs; such as patching and updating, and appropriate administration of accounts and privilege limitations.

And in terms of information sharing and intelligence, Krebs says DHS is working to get the security clearances needed for state election officials. His division created the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or the EI-ISAC, in February. In its first three months,

the center reached participation from senior election officials in all 50 states.

Tune in to the weekly CyberCast to hear more about how DHS is preparing election security pilots that could scale in time for the 2020 elections. Plus, learn why focusing on contextualizing risk management, rather than chasing every cyberthreat is where DHS is pivoting its critical infrastructure security model.

McConnell Talks Tough On Russian Hackers, Anti-ICE Activists

By Phillip M. Bailey

[Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#), July 27, 2018

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said this week Russians “better quit messing around” in U.S. elections, but then said Friday securing ballots is up to state and local officials.

“There has been a lot of interaction from the administration and from the Senate Intelligence Committee, (which) actually laid out advice to state and local officials who in our country conduct the elections,” McConnell said at a Friday press conference in Louisville.

McConnell, the Republican leader, was responding to a question about hacking attempts against Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill, of Missouri, who was unsuccessfully targeted by Russians this week.

McCaskill is the first known U.S. lawmaker targeted by foreign cyber warfare in connection to the upcoming fall elections since attacks were launched against the 2016 presidential race.

McConnell's office said he has called on several Senate committees to examine and make recommendations on additional steps that could respond to or deter Russian interference.

McConnell: If socialists had their way, we'd have no borders and no security

But it's remains unclear what specific action is being taken to block those cyber attacks.

“The Russians, as we know, are bad actors,” McConnell said Friday during his second press conference in as many weeks in his home state. “They messed around in the last election, and I've made it clear that they better not mess around with another one. And we're on the watch for any efforts they may make to interfere in the 2018 election.”

Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Grimes did not respond immediately to a request for comment Friday, but previously has said the state's ballots are safe because its voting equipment is not connected to the internet.

The White House said a meeting of the National Security Council on Friday, President Trump and others heard plans to safeguard U.S. elections against “malicious

actors.” It said efforts are underway to provide cybersecurity help to state and local authorities.

McConnell had a bigger appetite for badgering Democrats and their split over a grassroots movement to abolish the Immigration and Custom Enforcement agency.

More: Hecklers spoil another Mitch McConnell meal by blaring ‘Fight The Power’

Louisville activists, some of whom have heckled McConnell in public in recent weeks, escalated their tactics this week in their movement to get rid of ICE. Police arrested nine demonstrators on Thursday who had blocked the elevators to the local immigration court inside the Heyburn Building on West Broadway.

The groups behind the Occupy ICE movement also set up a new encampment that was quickly squashed by Louisville police who cited local anti-camping rules. Earlier police successfully ended an encampment outside the agency's downtown office that had lasted for almost two weeks.

McConnell said he visited the local ICE office on Friday to show support those agents for their “patriotic” efforts in protecting the country from dangerous and illegal “aliens” in the country.

Opinion: Louisville Socialists aren't after intimidation but rather speaking truth

“I wanted to go by and tell them I was proud of them and we're grateful for the hard work that they do and make sure that people in Louisville and across our state understand what ICE actually does,” he said.

Chanelle Helm, an Occupy ICE organizer in Louisville, described McConnell's visit to the agency on Friday as “disgraceful.” She said the Louisville immigrants that her group is advocating for are not criminals.

“It's just a media ploy,” Helm said. “It's just something so that he can fit into that Trump base.”

McConnell repeated his earlier criticism that Democrats who are possible presidential contenders in 2020 have embraced the abolish ICE movement. He tried to link those potential candidates to avowed socialists who are associated with the Occupy ICE movement.

“The folks in the streets outside who've been encamping downtown and have been approaching me in various restaurants are in favor of open borders, eliminating ICE and in fact argued in a recent op-ed that it was kind of pointless to have border enforcement at all,” McConnell said.

Reporter Zahria Rogers contributed to this report. Reporter Phillip M. Bailey can be reached at 502-582-4475 or pbailey@courierjournal.com. Support strong local journalism by subscribing today: courier-journal.com/philb.

Russian Hackers Appear To Shift Focus To U.S. Power Grid

By David E. Sanger

[New York Times](#), July 27, 2018

State-sponsored Russian hackers appear far more interested this year in demonstrating that they can disrupt the American electric utility grid than the midterm elections, according to United States intelligence officials and technology company executives.

Despite attempts to infiltrate the online accounts of two Senate Democrats up for re-election, intelligence officials said they have seen little activity by Russian military hackers aimed at either major American political figures or state voter registration systems.

By comparison, according to intelligence officials and executives of the companies that oversee the world's computer networks, there is surprisingly far more effort directed at implanting malware in the electrical grid.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence findings, but their conclusions were confirmed by several executives of technology and technology security firms.

This week, the Department of Homeland Security reported that over the last year, Russia's military intelligence agency had infiltrated the control rooms of power plants across the United States. In theory, that could enable it to take control of parts of the grid by remote control.

While the department cited "hundreds of victims" of the attacks, far more than they had previously acknowledged, there is no evidence that the hackers tried to take over the plants, as Russian actors did in Ukraine in 2015 and 2016.

In interviews, American intelligence officials said that the department had understated the scope of the threat. So far the White House has said little about the intrusions other than raise the fear of such breaches to maintain old coal plants in case they are needed to recover from a major attack.

On Friday, President Trump was briefed on government efforts to protect the coming midterm elections from what a White House statement described as "malign foreign actors." It said it was giving cybersecurity support to state and local governments to protect their election systems.

"The president has made it clear that his administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state to other malicious actors," the statement said.

It is possible that Russian hackers are holding their fire until closer to Election Day in November. Given the indictments this month of 12 Russian military officers who are accused of American election interference, the agency once known as the G.R.U. may be all too aware it is being closely watched by the National Security Agency and other American intelligence services.

But that has not completely deterred Russia's intelligence agencies from targeting politicians.

Microsoft announced at a security conference last week that it stopped an attack last fall aimed at Senate staff offices. While the company did not identify who was targeted, Senator Claire McCaskill, Democrat of Missouri, who faces a tight race for re-election, said on Thursday night that her office had been struck in what she called an unsuccessful attack.

She acknowledged the breach only after The Daily Beast identified her as one of the lawmakers whose offices had been the target of an effort to obtain passwords.

"Russia continues to engage in cyberwarfare against our democracy," Ms. McCaskill said in a statement. "While this attack was not successful, it is outrageous that they think they can get away with this. I will not be intimidated."

American officials said it was unclear whether the attack was related to Ms. McCaskill's re-election bid. She serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and one senior official said it was possible that the hackers were seeking a way into the panel's access to classified military operations and budgets.

Officials of Microsoft, which detected the intrusion in October and November, agreed.

"When we see an attempt like this, we have no way of discerning what the attacker's motivation is," Tom Burt, the vice president for customer security and trust at Microsoft, said on Friday.

Ms. McCaskill was one of two legislators whose offices Microsoft found were being targeted by the Russian hackers; the company has declined to name the other. (Mr. Burt initially told the Aspen Security Forum last week that three members of Congress had been targeted, but he said on Friday that the many accounts that were targeted now appear to have belonged to employees from only two legislative offices.)

Microsoft blocked the attacks with a special court order that allowed it to seize control of internet domains created by Russians that appeared to be official Microsoft sites, but were not. The company has used that procedure at least three times against hackers who are linked to Russian military intelligence.

But beyond those attempts, Mr. Burt and several American intelligence officials said there have been surprisingly few cyberattack attempts directed at political leaders, at least compared with 2016.

"We are not seeing the level of activity in the midterm elections that we saw two years ago," Mr. Burt said. "But it is still early."

In part that may be because midterm elections are far more difficult to influence than a presidential race. It would require separate interventions in more than 460 contests, many of which would be of little interest to a foreign power.

"I see 2018 as a ramp-up to 2020," said Laura Rosenberger, the director of the Alliance for Securing

Democracy at the German Marshall Fund. Ms. Rosenberger, a former State Department official and foreign policy adviser to Hillary Clinton during the 2016 campaign, has been leading one of the most comprehensive efforts to track and expose foreign influence in American elections.

She said the Russian intelligence hackers “want to make a highly polarized electorate even more polarized and undermine faith in the election systems.”

In a presentation at the Aspen forum, the new chief of the United States Cyber Command spoke at length about a new approach of “persistent engagement” with American adversaries, an effort to see attacks amassing in networks overseas before they strike in the United States.

The commander, Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, who is also the director of the National Security Agency, said that he had set up a Russia small group after assuming command in the spring, but said nothing about its operations. The N.S.A. is responsible for defending government networks and conducting covert offensive operations.

He spent much of his talk describing the difficulties of countering states that “operate below the threshold level of war,” which is how he and other officials often refer to the Russian efforts to influence the election.

Last year, President Trump’s national security adviser, John R. Bolton, called the Russian hacking of the Democratic National Committee during the 2016 election “an ‘act of war.’” The hackers are accused of stealing of the committee’s data and then publishing stolen emails through a number of websites, including WikiLeaks.

Just as it is difficult to judge the intent of the Russian hackers in attacking Ms. McCaskill’s office, it is hard to fully understand why they have put so much effort into installing “implants” — hard-to-find malware — in the utility operating systems.

The fear, of course, is that Russia may be planning to unplug American power systems in a time of conflict. But such an attack would almost certainly result in a military response, as General Nakasone obliquely suggested at the Aspen forum.

It is possible that the hackers are simply trying to demonstrate what they are capable of, just as they did at the end of 2014 when they fought the N.S.A.’s efforts to force them from the White House’s unclassified email systems.

In the cases described by the Department of Homeland Security, as presented to the electric utilities and outside experts, the Russian hackers went into the power plants through the networks of contractors, some of whom were ill-protected. Those contractors provided software to the utility company’s systems. Then they used “spearphishing” emails, trying to trick utility operators into changing their passwords.

That is exactly the approach used against Ms. McCaskill’s staff, the officials said.

Concerns Rise About Russian Attempts To Disrupt US Electrical Grid: Report

By John Bowden

[The Hill](#), July 28, 2018

Intelligence officials and security analysts say Russian hackers are devoting much more effort toward implanting malicious software in the U.S. power grid than attempting to breach electoral systems, according to a new report.

Several intelligence officials told The New York Times that Russian efforts had been more focused on attacking and infiltrating U.S. infrastructure systems, while interference in electoral systems remained lower than the level witnessed in 2016.

The report comes days after the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reported that the scope of Russian intrusions was far greater than previously realized, and that Russian hackers gained access to the control rooms of power plants across the country.

“They got to the point where they could have thrown switches” said Jonathan Homer, chief of industrial control system analysis for DHS.

Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill (D), who faces a tough reelection fight this year, told reporters this week that her office had been the victim of a Russian hacking attempt that Senate security staff had warned about earlier in the year.

“Russia continues to engage in cyber warfare against our democracy,” McCaskill said in a statement. “I will continue to speak out and press to hold them accountable. While this attack was not successful, it is outrageous that they think they can get away with this. I will not be intimidated. I’ve said it before and I will say it again, Putin is a thug and a bully.”

The Times report notes that one other Democratic lawmaker facing a reelection bid was targeted by Russian hackers, but the identity of the lawmaker has not been reported.

The White House said Friday in a statement that President Trump had made clear that future Russian intrusions would not be tolerated, despite criticism that Trump has faced for his statement appearing to cast doubt on the intelligence community’s assertion that Russian agents interfered in the 2016 election.

“The President has made it clear that his Administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state or other malicious actors,” the statement said.

With Hacking Of US Utilities, Russia Could Move From Cyber Espionage Toward Cyber War – GCN

By Frank J. Cilluffo

[Government Computer News](#), July 27, 2018

This article was first posted on The Conversation.

Even before the revelation on July 23 that Russian government hackers had penetrated the computer systems of U.S. electric utilities and could have caused blackouts, government agencies and electricity industry leaders were working to protect U.S. customers and society as a whole. These developments, alarming as they might seem, are not new. But they highlight an important distinction of conflict in cyberspace: between probing and attacking.

Various adversaries –including Russia, but also China, North Korea and Iran – have been testing and mapping U.S. industrial systems for years. Yet to date there has been no public acknowledgment of physical damage from a foreign cyberattack on U.S. soil on the scale of Russia shutting off electricity in the Ukrainian capital or Iran attacking a Saudi Arabian government-owned oil company, destroying tens of thousands of computers and allegedly attempting to cause an explosion.

The U.S. and its allies have substantial capabilities, too, some of which have reportedly been directed against foreign powers. Stuxnet, for instance, was a cyberattack often attributed to the U.S. and Israel that disrupted Iran's nuclear weapons development efforts.

The distinction between exploiting weaknesses to gather information – also known as “intelligence preparation of the battlefield” – and using those vulnerabilities to actually do damage is impossibly thin and depends on the intent of the people doing it. Intentions are notoriously difficult to figure out. In global cyberspace they may change depending on world events and international relations. The dangers – to the people of the U.S. and other countries both allied and opposed – underscore the importance of international agreement on what constitutes an act of war in cyberspace and the need for clear rules of engagement.

Advanced adversaries

In July the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington University, where we serve, hosted a forum on protecting energy infrastructure. At that event, a Duke Energy Corporation executive reported that in 2017, the company experienced over 650 million attempts to intrude into their system. That number is startling, though hard to contextualize. More generally, however, some efforts directed against the U.S. are extremely sophisticated.

Federal officials have said that starting in 2016, continuing in 2017 and likely still ongoing, Russian government attacks took advantage of trusting relationships between key vendors of services related to equipment and operations for utility companies. Compromising the vendors' computers was the first step toward breaching the security of systems not directly connected to the internet.

It's not just electric utilities – crucial though they are to almost every aspect of modern society. The Russian intrusion targeted computerized industrial control systems that are at the beating hearts of every part of critical public and private

infrastructure, including water, energy, telecommunications and manufacturing. In the U.S., more than 85 percent of those critical potential targets are owned and operated by private companies. Once considered safely on home soil far from conflict, these firms are now at the center of the international cyberspace battleground.

Setting up defenses

The energy industry has invested heavily in protecting itself and is leveraging a sector-wide collaboration called the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center to communicate between companies about warnings and threats to grid operations. But the task is too great – and the consequences to public health and safety too severe – for private companies to handle the burden on their own. As a result, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been investigating breaches like the Russian intrusions and briefing industry leaders about what it finds.

COMMENTARY With hacking of US utilities, Russia could move from cyber espionage toward cyber war

For instance, the Wall Street Journal reported that DHS cybersecurity experts are “looking for evidence that the Russians are automating their attacks, which could presage a large increase in hacking efforts.” That possibility, taken together with the energy-sector focus of the utility-hacking effort and the perpetrators' interest in industrial control systems, could be a signal that Russia may be considering shifting from exploring U.S. utility systems to actually attacking them.

An upcoming meeting may deepen federal-corporate collaboration: On July 31, the Department of Homeland Security is hosting a National Cybersecurity Summit to bring together government, industry and academic experts in protecting the country's most important infrastructure. It will take all their efforts to keep up with the threats, particularly as the underlying techniques and technologies continue to evolve. The “internet of things,” for instance, connects physical devices in ways that merge the virtual world with the real one – making people only as safe as the weakest link in the network or supply chain.

The federal hint about identifying automated attacks offers a glimpse into the not-too-distant future. In 2017, Russian President Putin declared that “Whoever becomes the leader in [artificial intelligence] will become the ruler of the world.” In May 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the Chinese Academies of Sciences and Engineering of his plan to make China “a world leader in science and technology,” which includes “integration of the internet, big data, and artificial intelligence with the real economy.”

Those statements, and the inexorable march of research and development, mean that machine learning – and ultimately quantum

computing too – will play an increasing role in cyberespionage and cyberwarfare, as well as cybersecurity. The line between probing and attacking – and between defensive readiness and offensive preparation – may get even thinner.

About the Authors

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Russian Hackers Are Targeting America's Power Grid, Intelligence Officials Warn

By David Brennan

[Newsweek](#), July 28, 2018

Russian hackers are switching their attention from disrupting American democratic processes and instead exploring ways to damage the country's electrical grid, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

Speaking to the New York Times on the condition of anonymity, American agents said Russia's military intelligence has infiltrated the control rooms of multiple U.S. power plants, giving them the ability to disrupt power flow across the country. Their efforts could allow Russian operatives to take control of elements of the grid remotely, though there is not yet any evidence that hackers attempted to take control of any facilities, as they did in Ukraine in 2015 and 2016.

Earlier this week, the Department of Homeland Security said there had been 'hundreds of victims' of such attacks. Intelligence officials told the Times that President Donald Trump's administration is underestimating the scope of infiltration.

Hackers accessed the power plants through the websites of private contractors, some of which were not adequately protected. They then used "spearphishing" emails to try and get the utility workers to change their passwords, giving the hackers direct access. This is the same method used by Russian intelligence to hack the Democratic National Congress.

American agents are watching closely for Russian activity as the November midterm elections approach. The White House released a statement Friday noting its efforts to protect against "malign foreign actors," which include cybersecurity support to voting systems. "The president has made it clear that his administration will not tolerate foreign interference in our elections from any nation state to other malicious actors," the statement read.

It may be too little too late from the White House, which has faced repeated criticisms for failing to adequately fund America's cyber shield. At his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin last month in Helsinki, Trump even suggested the U.S. and Russia might work together in the cyber arena, a suggestion that raised enormous alarm in the intelligence community and drew mockery from commentators.

The hackers certainly do not seem deterred. This week, the first cyber savloes were launched at two candidates, one of whom was Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri. McCaskill, who is facing a close race for re-election, said Thursday she had been targeted in an effort to steal her passwords. The senator blamed Russian operatives, noting, "While this attack was not successful, it is outrageous that they think they can get away with this. I will not be intimidated."

The attacks were detected and blocked by Microsoft. The company shut down the operation using a special court order allowing it to seize control of fake internet domains, designed to look like official Microsoft sites.

Pentagon Creating Software 'Do Not Buy' List To Keep Out Russia, China

By Mike Stone

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Pentagon Report Will Reveal Military's Dependence On Chinese Components

By Mike Stone

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Pentagon's 'Do Not Buy' List Targets Russian, Chinese Software

By Roxana Tiron

[Bloomberg News](#), July 27, 2018

The Pentagon has an expanding "do-not-buy" software list to eliminate equipment of Russian and Chinese origin, according to Ellen Lord, the Defense Department's acquisitions chief.

The Defense Department started putting the list together six months ago and had to work closely with the intelligence community to identify the equipment and pinpoint origin, Lord told reporters at the Pentagon on Friday.

"What we are doing is making sure that we do not buy software that is Russian or Chinese provenance, for instance, and quite often that is difficult to tell at first glance because of holding companies," Lord said. "We have identified certain

companies that do not operate in a way consistent with what we have for defense standards.”

While Lord declined to disclose specific companies included on the list, rising concern about security threats prompted Congress and the administration to focus on several Chinese companies such as ZTE Corp. and Huawei. The compromise fiscal year 2019 defense authorization bill, H.R. 5515, would ban the government from buying and using any equipment made by the two Chinese telecommunications companies.

ZTE was essentially shut down for a period earlier this year while the U.S. banned purchases from the No. 2 Chinese telecoms gear-maker. The administration agreed to lift that moratorium – which was punishment for violating Iran and North Korean sanctions, then lying about it – only after ZTE reshuffled its board and senior management, paid a hefty fine and promised to allow external monitoring of its activities.

Once a company makes it on the list, the Pentagon’s acquisition officials check the list to make sure that they do not buy equipment made by those companies.

“It really speaks to cyber security writ large, which is one of our greatest concerns right now,” Lord said. “This is a challenge for us in terms of how to deal with the industrial base, particularly small companies who don’t always have the resources.”

Separately, software made by Russia’s Kaspersky Lab has already been scrubbed from U.S. government networks. Kaspersky Lab, which is viewed as having ties to Russian intelligence, has been fighting Congress’ decision to prohibit government use of Kaspersky software products as part of the 2018 defense authorization act (Public Law 115-91).

D.C. Government Targeted By Overseas Hacking Attempt; Referred Matter To Feds

By Fenit Nirappil

[Washington Post](#), July 28, 2018

The D.C. city government was the target of a hacking attempt from overseas earlier this week, said local officials who have referred the matter to federal authorities for investigation.

City employees received strange emails on Tuesday that attempted to lure them into revealing their passwords and other sensitive information. Officials say they aren’t aware of any information that was compromised as a result of the phishing attacks, and said they “successfully defended” against the attack.

“The District of Columbia government received multiple and perhaps coordinated email phishing attacks from overseas and domestic sources on Tuesday, July 24,” said Barney Krucoff, the city’s interim chief technology officer, in a statement to The Washington Post.

“The DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) took multiple actions to mitigate the attacks including reporting the events to federal authorities for investigation and potential prosecution.”

It wasn’t clear who generated the emails, which were sent across the D.C. government to 30,000 employees.

Phishing, or a broad attempt to trick someone into revealing sensitive information, is a common hacker technique.

Russia is suspected of deploying it as part of its interference in the 2016 presidential race. Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman John Podesta received a phishing email, leading to the leak of his emails throughout the campaign. Earlier this month, a dozen Russian military intelligence officers were indicted on charges connected to the hack of Democrats in 2016.

Hackers with the Russian military intelligence agency also targeted three candidates running in the November midterm elections, Microsoft executive Tom Burt said at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado last week. U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) said this week she was one of those targets.

“Phishing attempts like this one are common attacks most government agencies experience, and being in Washington, D.C. we are particularly susceptible,” Krucoff wrote in a Thursday email to District employees.

He said the District can block links and senders of verified phishing attempts for phones, computers and tablets connected to the government’s secure network, but not for devices connected to home or public networks.

“The frequency and sophistication of phishing attacks will continue to increase,” Krucoff wrote. “District employees should exercise caution.”

Hack Of D.C. Police Security Cameras Was Part Of Bigger Ransomware Scheme, Prosecutors Say

By Peter Hermann

[Washington Post](#), July 24, 2018

When hackers took over two-thirds of the D.C. police department’s surveillance cameras days before the 2017 presidential inauguration, it appeared the cyberattack was limited to elicit a single ransom payment.

But court documents show the alleged scheme that January was far more ambitious.

Federal authorities say two Romanians accused in the hacking planned to use the police department computers to email ransomware to more than 179,000 accounts. That would have allowed them to extort those users as well — and use D.C. government computers to hide their digital tracks. Prosecutors said the alleged hackers had also stolen banking credentials and account passwords, and, using the

police computers, could have committed “fraud schemes with anonymity.”

In addition, authorities said they uncovered a separate scheme run by the same people — an allegedly fraudulent business that tricked Amazon’s offices in Great Britain into sending money to the Romanians. (Amazon’s chief executive, Jeffrey P. Bezos, owns The Washington Post.)

The intrusion in the District occurred from Jan. 9 through Jan. 12, 2017, and caused 123 of the police department’s 187 surveillance cameras to go dark eight days before Donald Trump was sworn in as president, sparking national security concerns. It appears the timing was a coincidence; prosecutors said the suspects most likely did not know the computers they allegedly hacked were used by police.

Federal court documents show Eveline Cismaru, 28, of Romania, has been charged with committing fraud and computer crimes in the hacking of D.C. police cameras. (U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia)

While D.C. police say the incident did not impact safety or harm any investigations, cybersecurity experts said it highlights the digital threat faced by governments and businesses and raises questions about the city’s ability to quickly identify hacking.

“The question we should be asking of police is what controls were lacking and why were they unable to detect such an obvious intrusion,” said Alex Rice, the chief technology officer and co-founder of HackerOne, a California firm that works with companies and the U.S. Department of Defense to test computer security.

District officials said they are working hard to protect the city against a constant stream of cyberattacks. They did not answer questions specifically about the police cameras, citing the ongoing criminal investigation.

Kevin Donahue, the deputy mayor for public safety, said in a statement that the District’s cybersecurity program “is critical to our public safety, health care, and public education agencies.”

His statement added that “each year, we see more than one billion malicious intrusion attempts, including ransomware, denial of service, and phishing attacks. We are continuously working to improve our cybersecurity defenses to ensure they protect our IT systems from the constantly evolving methods of cyber attacks.”

Mihai Alexandru Isvanca, 25, of Romania, has been charged with committing fraud and computer crimes in the hacking of D.C. police cameras. (U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia)

The U.S. attorney’s office for the District is seeking to extradite Mihai Alexandru Isvanca, 25, from Romania. His alleged accomplice, Eveline Cismaru, 28, has been extradited, and made her initial appearance Friday in U.S. District Court in Washington.

Prosecutors said Cismaru lacks ties to the United States and fled Romania while appealing a court order to extradite her from there to the United States. Authorities tracked her to London, where she was arrested, prosecutors said in court documents filed Friday.

Isvanca and Cismaru have each been charged with fraud and computer crimes and face 20 years in prison if convicted. An attorney for Isvanca did not return calls seeking comment.

Cary Citronberg, who is representing Cismaru, said in a statement that his client has a 2-year-old son in Europe. “We believe Ms. Cismaru belongs back with her son and we are hopeful she will be able to put this ordeal behind her quickly so she can be reunited with her family,” he said.

A hearing in federal court is scheduled for Aug. 16. Cismaru is being detained.

Police say the alleged hackers were detected only when they shut the system down.

D.C. police said the hack that locked up the system was noticed after a city employee tried to sign on to the computer system that runs the outdoor cameras and saw what is called a “splashscreen.” A notice highlighted in bright red announced a “Cerber ransomware” and warned that “your documents, photos, databases and other important files have been encrypted!”

It said the system could be unlocked with a bitcoin payment that would amount to more than \$60,000. Cerber, along with “dharma,” are two types of ransomware programs. Both had been downloaded onto the police computer system that runs the cameras. Authorities said the hackers routed emails through the police servers, including some sent to vand.suflete on Gmail. The term in Romanian means “selling souls.”

D.C. officials quickly took the closed-circuit TV system offline, removed the software and restarted the cameras. They ignored the ransom demand.

Authorities said they later learned some of the emails routed through the police computers referenced IP addresses (a computer’s unique address) that did not include systems owned by D.C. police. Authorities said one was a health-care company in London. One browser downloaded onto the police computer had a user name listed as “David Andrew” with a Gmail account of “david.andrews2005.”

In one affidavit filed in the case by the U.S. Secret Service, prosecutors say Isvanca and Cismaru also set up a fake company called “Lake L.” and linked it to Amazon.com.uk. Authorities said investigators found some of the same emails used by the fake company as used by the hackers on the police computers.

When people placed orders with Amazon, the affidavit says, the suspects used stolen credit cards to buy the requested items at another website. Once those items were shipped from the other website, the affidavit says the

suspects provided those postal tracking numbers to Amazon, which then released the money paid by the purchasers to the suspects.

Police in Romania and in the United States were able to track various computer IP addresses and email accounts to the suspects, according to the affidavit. One tip came from an online takeout order from a restaurant in Bucharest, Andy's Pizza.

The person placed an order on Jan. 9, 2017 — the same day the D.C. computers were hacked — using the david.andrews2005 account and gave the clerk the name, "Mihai Alexandru," according to an invoice pulled by police and referenced in the affidavit filed in federal court.

Later, during an interview with investigators, the affidavit says Isvanca told them that Cismaru lived in a fifth-floor apartment on Strada Bucur, near downtown and where the takeout order had originated. That, police said, helped them link the email address to the suspects.

Rice said that police in cyber investigations like to collect what they call "hard evidence," such as a paper receipt, to make it more difficult for a defendant to argue that someone else had used or hacked the computer. The receipt from Andy's Pizza, Rice said, appears to be that type of evidence.

Rice said it appears that U.S. and foreign law enforcement agencies worked well together, but he warned "that we can't rely on law enforcement as a deterrent" to cybercrimes. "We have got to hold companies and organizations responsible for implementing basic security practices that make it difficult for criminals. They are tempted by this low-level fruit."

NDAA Calls For Cyber Warfare Strategy – Defense Systems

By Lauren C. Williams

[Defense Systems](#), July 27, 2018

The final 2019 National Defense Authorization Act could bring the U.S. one step closer to developing a cyber warfare doctrine.

The must-pass defense spending bill will establish the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, which will "develop a consensus on a strategic approach to defending the United States in cyberspace against cyber attacks of significant consequences," according to bill text included in the final conference report released July 23.

"The Cyberspace Solarium Commission is an opportunity to set America's cyber doctrine before it's too late," said Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), who championed the amendment, in a statement.

"This is a major victory for those who have been sounding the alarm on cybersecurity...we don't have a

playbook and our enemies are already on offense. This is the new frontier of warfare and America cannot fall behind."

The commission will have 14 members, including the principal deputy Director of National Intelligence, deputy director of Homeland Security, deputy defense secretary, the Federal Bureau of Investigation director, five senators, and five representatives.

The conference report also mandates a review of Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIUx), its effectiveness, how it can be integrated into the the Defense research and engineering community, and efficacy of the unit's initiatives and investments.

Additionally, the defense workforce will see a 25 percent overhead budget reduction by 2020 with a review every five years. The final NDAA empowers the chief management officer with eliminating redundancies in support agencies referred to as the "fourth estate" across the organization, including areas such as logistics, human resources, services contracting, and real property management. This is a far cry from calls by Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, to phase out back office agencies including the Defense Information Systems Agency, the Washington Headquarters Service and others.

The conference report also included a mandate for Defense Department to review workforce costs of civilian, military, and contracted personnel.

Chinese Hackers Are Attacking Government Agencies Via Snail Mail

By Lee Mathews

[Forbes](#), July 27, 2018

Over the last couple of years there have been some pretty sophisticated cyber attacks in the headlines. A recent string that's been targeting government offices in the U.S. is definitely not one of those. The hackers behind it are sending malware in the mail.

It sounds crazy, right? Veteran cyber sleuth Brian Krebs assures that's exactly what has been going down. The suspicious envelopes appear to bear China Post markings and they've showing up in mailboxes at several state and local government offices.

Inside, there's a rambling letter that seems to be pitching... well, something. It's hard to tell exactly what the subject is. There are lengthy passages about fireworks and parades and a mention of the film industry, but none of it is particularly coherent.

That's probably the point. Whoever put these packages together knows that confusing a person can help kick his or her curiosity into high gear. And curiosity is just the sort of thing that might lead a person to insert a random CD into a

computer without having the slightest idea who sent it or why. Yes, people really do stuff like that.

In fact, the letter itself may be a carelessly-typed mess because whoever mailed it figures it won't be read anyway. The mere presence of something that can go into a computer is enough to convince a lot of people that they should put it in a computer.

It's way more likely than you might think. A study carried out in 2016 found that 50% of people would plug in a random USB drive that they found laying around in a public place.

According to Krebs, state archives, historical societies, and one state's Department of Cultural Affairs have received the discs. At first glance, those may seem like strange targets.

The hackers could be looking for a back door – hoping to infect a computer somewhere it won't be detected quickly in order to do reconnaissance on a bigger target. Then again, it could be an unsophisticated ransomware attack that's aimed at low-hanging fruit.

Whatever the case might be, let's hope that no one actually pops one of these discs into a government computer.

Space: The Last Frontier For Cybersecurity

By Kathryn Waldron

[The Hill](#), July 28, 2018

The mental images conjured up by Trump's call for a space force may initially have appeared better suited to the silver screen. But anyone concerned about America's national security shouldn't let thoughts of spaceships or lasers overshadow the fact that the United States has significant security interests in space — in the form of our satellites — that we need to protect, especially against cyber threats.

Satellites face many security risks. Perhaps the most obvious threat is physical destruction — either destroying the ground station through conventional weapons or destroying the satellite itself using anti-satellite missiles. Satellites can also be damaged or destroyed using high powered lasers, microwaves or electromagnetic pulses. In other cases, it's not the satellite's physical existence that is threatened, but it's functional one. Jamming or spoofing radio frequency signals can interfere with a satellite's ability to send and receive data.

But one of the most dangerous threats satellites face is from cyber attacks. Satellites offer hackers a variety of access points – including the antennas on both the satellites and the ground stations and the user terminals here on earth. Attacks can range from stealing data to sending fake or corrupt data to a complete shutdown of all the satellite's operations. Cyber threats are also very hard to detect, and even when discovered, it is difficult to pinpoint and hold responsible the actors behind any attacks.

Policymakers should take note that both the International Space Station and NASA have suffered cyber attacks before. Until 2010, the International Space Station (ISS) was not directly connected to the internet. Nonetheless, both before 2010 and after, the ISS was infected by malware multiple times through astronauts' infected laptops or USB drives. In 2008, the ISS was infected by a worm called W32.Gammima.AG, a gaming virus intended to collect personal information. Even more alarming, between 2009 and 2011, hackers leaked NASA's control codes for the ISS, as well as other sensitive data. On several occasions NASA has lost "full functional control" of important systems thanks to targeted attacks.

China, Russia, North Korea and Iran all have advanced cyber capabilities and a history of attacking American assets in the cyber domain. In a 2017 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing addressing adversaries with the capacity to disable satellite constellations, General David Goldfein stated "the two countries that are making the most investment in this area are China and Russia."

China has already been implicated in several cyber-attacks against U.S. satellites. In 2007 and 2008, suspected Chinese hackers targeted satellites operated by the U.S. Geological Survey and NASA, using a ground station in Norway to interfere with communication for several minutes. An attack where the hackers gained control of systems at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory was traced to IP addresses in China. And in 2014, hackers attacked the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) weather and satellite systems.

China is not a partner at the ISS; no Chinese astronauts spend time there, and cyberattacks are making future prospects of collaboration less likely. American legislation prevents NASA from collaborating with China or any Chinese owned companies, unless specifically granted permission. What's more, espionage concerns led to a ban on hosting Chinese visitors at NASA facilities.

China isn't the only country worth keeping an eye on. In 2015, a Russian group of hackers code-named Turla and alleged to have connections to Russian intelligence hijacked unencrypted commercial satellite connections to steal data. And even non-state actors can pose a defense threat. In 2014, then 25-year-old British citizen Sean Caffrey hacked a Department of Defense satellite system, as well as approximately 30,000 satellite phones, stealing the personal data of hundreds of Pentagon employees.

The 2019 NDAA bill passed by both the House and the Senate doesn't include a space force, although it does call for assessments of potential cybersecurity issues regarding GPS systems and the activities of the International Space Station. The bill does expand the authority of U.S. Cyber Command to respond to any cyberattacks car from Russia, China, North Korea and Iran by taking "take appropriate and proportional

action.” Yet there is room to do more — especially to guarantee the cybersecurity of our satellites.

Satellites are a key U.S. interest. This isn’t to advocate for slipshod, overly hasty programs created by alarmist rhetoric. But it is a reality that technological development will not wait for the U.S. military to catch up. If Trump is serious about creating a new branch of the military, then Congress and the DoD need to take a serious look at our current vulnerabilities and the most effective ways to counteract them. In the case of space, the first step for securing American interests may not actually involve launching anything into the blue beyond at all.

Kathryn Waldron is a research assistant at the R Street Institute, a nonprofit group aimed at promoting limited government.

DHS Warns Companies Targeted On Dark Web

By Brooke Crothers

[Fox News](#), July 27, 2018

Criminals on the dark web have a growing appetite for hacking into corporate applications, a new alert from the Department of Homeland Security says.

DHS this week pointed to research from cybersecurity firms Onapsis and Digital Shadows that shows cybercriminals targeting so-called Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications, which typically hold a company’s most sensitive data and critical business processes.

DHS began noticing this back in May 2016 when it issued an alert that 36 global organizations were the target of hacks.

“This alert was, however, only the tip of the iceberg, as threat actors have continued to evolve since then and expanded their ERP attack vectors,” a report this month from Onapsis/Digital Shadows says.

Applications that get particular attention from cybercriminals are those from Walldorf, Germany-based SAP and Redwood Shores, Calif.-based Oracle, according to the research.

Using these vulnerabilities “attackers can get full access to all information” stored in an application, Juan Pablo Perez-Etchegoyen, CTO of Onapsis, told Fox News in an email.

“Clear Indications” of interest among cybercriminals and on Dark Web forums

One of the early indicators was in 2013 when a user on “Exploit.in,” a Russian dark web criminal forum, posted details on how to compromise SAP applications. In the following years, dark web sites have hosted video tutorials and tools for exploits, according to the report.

Recently, there has been a “dramatic increase” in interest to hack into SAP applications on dark web and cybercriminal forums, the report added.

“We analyzed the last 5 years. There has been a consistent number of campaigns through all 5 years and we

have seen examples as early as April this year as well,” Onapsis’ Perez-Etchegoyen told Fox News.

That includes the exchange of detailed information on SAP hacking at a criminal forum, according to the report.

In addition to criminal forums, exploits are traded in dark web marketplaces or at dedicated exploit sites. “Analyzing one of these sites, ‘Oday.today,’ we identified approximately 50 exploits for SAP products and 30 for the Oracle EBS technology stack,” the report said.

Both SAP and Oracle say they take security very seriously and urge customers to install fixes.

“Our recommendation to all of our customers is to implement SAP security patches as soon as they are available – typically on the second Tuesday of every month to protect SAP infrastructure from attacks,” a SAP spokesperson told Fox News.

“Oracle issued security updates for the vulnerabilities listed in this report in July and in October of last year,” an Oracle spokesperson told Fox News. “Oracle recommends that customers remain on actively-supported versions and apply security updates as quickly as possible.”

The report goes on to say that Onapsis and Digital Shadows have observed a “100 percent increase” in public exploits targeting SAP and Oracle ERP applications during the last three years. This jumped to 160 percent from 2016 to 2017.

U.S. CIO Suzette Kent Keys In On Talent Gap As Root Of Federal Cyber Struggles

By Billy Mitchell

[FedScoop](#), July 27, 2018

Suzette Kent is only five months on the job as federal CIO, but she’s quickly learned what’s at the heart of the government’s cybersecurity challenges.

Testifying Wednesday before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on the federal government’s struggles safeguarding its information, Kent repeatedly pointed to the lack of tech talent as the root of agencies’ perennial cybersecurity woes.

Asked how lawmakers could be of assistance in helping agencies better secure their IT infrastructures, Kent pointed immediately to a “continued focus on workforce activities.”

“In many cases, we still have almost a 25 percent gap in the number of cybersecurity resources we need across federal agencies and what we actually have in place,” she said. “And particularly we have some gaps in leadership and places where we have open positions that are key leaders. In many cases the individuals, when we get them in, their tenure is less than 12 to 18 months. There are multiple workforce actions, both at entry level and at leadership, and there are things that we continue dialogue with the private sector to see if we can fill those gaps.”

Kent — who had not worked in the federal government before joining the Trump administration — said there are still about 15,000 unfilled IT and cybersecurity positions around government. It has been a grueling battle for agencies, with the leadership of the Office of Personnel Management, to catalog those positions to get a better idea of exactly what they have and what they need. OPM just recently renewed its efforts on that front, saying it will survey agency hiring leaders and possibly offer new direct-hire authorities for IT and cyber roles.

Gene Dodaro, head of the Government Accountability Office, said it's OPM's current classification system that's the problem.

"That system was created many years ago, it didn't contemplate cybersecurity, they haven't adapted over time and so right now the phase one of what the current administration is currently doing is to take stock of what cybersecurity skills exist across the government," Dodaro said. A recent report from Dodaro's GAO team found that OPM is struggling to meet its goals in the initiative. "We should've known this for years earlier and developed new systems in place," he said Wednesday.

And he doesn't think, necessarily, that throwing more direct-hire authorities at agencies will alone fix the issue.

"Congress has been very good here — they've given a lot of special authorities to the agencies," he said. "But we found that they have over a hundred special hiring authorities, but they only use about a dozen or so. And so it's OPM hasn't really looked at whether these special hiring authorities are being effective or not. This needs more attention. I'm very glad the president reorganization proposal is focused on cybersecurity workforce."

However, Kent said progress is being made, "clarifying the specific positions, as well as common nomenclature." She referenced her office's recent release of the CISO Handbook, which is meant to "ensure that we are holding our cybersecurity teams accountable for the same standards of behavior across all of the agencies."

"But we still have work to do to fill those positions, and particularly in the entry levels to ensure that potentially we are identifying other skill sets in the federal government that we can move into some of those positions," she said.

Still, finding and assessing the gaps is only step one in improving the situation, and perhaps a much easier task than figuring out how to compete with the private sector for in-demand cybersecurity talent.

"The primary drivers of the vacancies is that cybersecurity skills are one of the hottest skills in the industry right now and we are competing with the private sector," Kent said. "As well, these cybersecurity professionals have an expectation of quick mobility, large challenges and some ability to move very quickly in their profession. And some of those things don't align well" with government bureaucracy.

And while the federal government can attract some with its variety of "exciting missions," she said, "so many times it's a question of compensation."

Virus Shuts Down City Computers In Valdez

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

VALDEZ, Alaska (AP) — The city of Valdez has shut down its entire computer infrastructure in the wake of a virus.

The Valdez Police Department says the computer virus was detected early Friday, forcing a shutdown of city computers and servers as a precaution.

Police say the city is getting assistance from the FBI's Cyber Crimes Unit to isolate the virus. They say it's the same virus that has shown up around the country and recently affected the Mat-Su Borough.

Officials say emergency services including police and fire are operating normally. The city's website and telephone system also are functioning.

Efforts to restore the system are expected to take place throughout the weekend.

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Scammers Lurking In Email Thread Take \$379,000, Nearly Derail Deal For Oregon Dream Home

[Oregonian](#), July 27, 2018

It seemed like just one of the many details that go into buying a house: to close the deal for their dream home near Lebanon, Pauline and Ben Weintraub needed to send a cashier's check or wire transfer.

In an email thread with their title company and real estate broker to arrange final details, a message arrived suggesting they wire the money to avoid delaying the transaction. It was a big sum, \$379,000, but the Weintraubs had been saving for years, and everyone in the thread was trusted.

They notified their broker the money was sent, then arranged the meeting to sign the papers and seal the deal. And then their broker called.

Their money had vanished. Their new home was on hold.

The broker told them the wire transfer hadn't gone through, and that he had never sent the email with the account number for the transfer. The couple appeared to be out hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it looked like they would lose their new house, too.

"We're super, super screwed right now," Ben Weintraub recalled thinking. "It's the worst possible combination that you could have imagined."

Investigators say the Weintraubs appear to have fallen victim to a new, insidious online scam. Hackers somehow obtained access to the email conversation with their broker and title company, then impersonated the broker and sent a fraudulent account number for the wire transfer.

Bankers and cybersecurity experts warn this kind of theft isn't as far-fetched as it might sound, with criminals targeting nearly \$1 billion in real estate transactions last year through similar scams.

"There's been a lot of these cases. I know hackers are going after either title companies or real estate agents," said Ken Westin, a senior security strategist and researcher in Portland. "This is becoming pretty common."

The Weintraubs landed with a rare fortunate ending: Months later they recovered most of the money they lost – and they got their dream home, too, after arranging an emergency, short-term loan. But experts say they were unusually lucky. Most people never see the money again.

The couple, young professionals in their mid 30s, were living in North Albany but wanted a home in the country. They had been looking for years and had made offers a couple times before.

When they found a 30-acre property for sale in a rural area near Lebanon, the Weintraubs were determined not to let it get away. It's private, on a dead-end street, close to family and just a short drive from Pauline's work. They hope to have a little hobby farm, growing lavender running a seasonal U-cut operation.

Everything about the purchase seemed routine, so far as they could tell. Their email thread with the title company and broker show the parties working out mundane details, like where to sign the papers.

There are clues, in hindsight, that show where things started to go wrong. Emails that appeared to be from their broker abruptly changed topic and began making spelling and grammatical errors as the messages pushed for a prompt wire transfer.

"If you wire, funds will be good funds right away," one message said. "They required you should wire funds now to avoid delay in closing. Let me know when you can send wire so I can send you wire instruction."

To the Weintraubs, none of that stood out in the context of a longer online conversation. And there was nothing strange about the request to wire the money – they had discussed it with the broker earlier.

"In this case, the emails and the directions on the wire (apparently) came from a trusted source," said Lebanon Police Det. Justin McCubbins, who is investigating the case.

Cybersecurity experts frequently warn about "spoofing" attacks, in which a hacker impersonates a trusted correspondent. The Weintraubs were apparently victims of an even more sinister scam, in which the spoofer inserted himself or herself into an ongoing email conversation.

"Essentially a hacker gets into an account and sits in an accounts and just waits," McCubbins said. He said he believes the hackers were lurking quietly, scanning their conversation for an opportune time to impersonate the broker and redirect the Weintraubs' money to the fraudulent account.

"The level of sophistication in this case is definitely higher," McCubbins said.

Jolene Watson manages Umpqua Bank's branch in Lebanon, where the Weintraubs kept their money. She said the bank immediately tried to stop the transfer and contacted Bank of America, home to the fraudulent account.

"To be honest, when I first heard about the situation, it was a gut-wrenching moment because when you do a wire (transfer) you often are unable to get the funds back," Watson said in an email. At Umpqua's request, Bank of America froze the fraudulent account – preserving most of the Weintraubs' funds.

"While I've not run into this exact type of fraud much, it is a growing national problem as cyber-criminals appear to have become more sophisticated at targeting the mortgage process," Watson said. "Homebuyers should definitely be aware of the risk and take precautions."

The FBI told The Miami Herald that criminals running this kind of scam tried to divert nearly \$1 billion from real estate transactions during the last fiscal year through fraudulent wire transfers, up from just \$19 million the prior year.

While McCubbins and the banks investigated, the Weintraubs' were left in limbo for more than a month. They say Bank of America refused to respond to their inquiries for weeks, so they told their story to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

The media outlet inquired on their behalf, and the Weintraubs said they heard from Bank of America almost immediately. Days later, the bank said it had a "resolution" to the issue – and a week later, the Weintraubs received a check for \$362,000.

That covered most of their losses but left them more than \$17,000 short. They said Bank of America would not explain why they didn't get the full amount.

In response to another inquiry from The Oregonian/OregonLive, bank spokeswoman Britney Sheehan declined to specifically address the Weintraubs' case, citing security and privacy. However, she said that fraudulent wire transfers typically involve multiple victims making claims on the same money.

"Each claim is thoroughly researched," Sheehan wrote in an email. "After our research is complete — and if we're lucky enough to recover any funds, which is rare — there is a process in place for returning any recovered funds to the claimants and the originating banks."

The hacker or hackers who stole the Weintraubs' funds could be anywhere in the world, so the chances of catching them and recovering the rest of the money are remote.

Still out \$17,000 – plus another \$8,000 in fees and interest triggered by the delay in closing the deal – the Weintraubs' asked their broker to cover their loss and told him others had suggested they sue. He declined to compensate them, asserting he had no liability for what happened.

The broker, Brian Weinhold, owner of Vanguard Realty Group in Corvallis, declined to say whose email account he believes was hacked.

"Either way, what does it matter? The damage was done, and this is happening all over," Weinhold said in an interview. Ultimately, he said, his clients were at fault.

"They made a poor choice to wire money when it had all the signs and markings that they shouldn't have done it," Weinhold said, noting misspellings and grammatical mistakes in the email thread. "It's unfortunately on them."

The Weintraubs don't see it that way – grammar and spelling mistakes are pretty common in email, after all. But Ben Weintraub said they're not dwelling on what happened, either.

"It's nice that we got the property and we got most of the money back," he said. "It would be nice to get the missing money to really feel complete."

Bankers and online security experts suggest taking an extra step when large sums are involved: call before sending money, talk directly to people you know, and slow down if things start to seem fishy.

"We don't really trust anyone anymore," Ben Weintraub said. "I think that's a big thing that came out of it: Let's triple-check everything now."

– Mike Rogoway | twitter: @rogoway | 503-294-7699

How Silicon Valley Became A Den Of Spies

By Zach Dorfman

[Politico Magazine](#), July 27, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO—In the fall of 1989, during the Cold War's wane and washed-out final months, the Berlin Wall was crumbling—and so was San Francisco. The powerful Loma Prieta earthquake, the most destructive to hit the region in more than 80 years, felled entire apartment buildings. Freeway overpasses shuddered and collapsed, swallowing cars like a sandpit. Sixty-three people were killed and thousands injured. And local Soviet spies, just like many other denizens of the Bay Area, applied for their share of the nearly \$3.5 billion in relief funds allocated by President George H.W. Bush.

FBI counterintelligence saw an opening, recalled Rick Smith, who worked on the Bureau's San Francisco-based Soviet squad from 1972 to 1992. When they discovered that a known Soviet spy, operating under diplomatic cover, had filed a claim, Smith and several other bureau officials posed as federal employees disbursing relief funds to meet with the spy. The goal was to compromise him with repeated

payments, then to turn him. "We can offer your full claim," Smith told the man. "Come meet us again." He agreed.

But the second time, the suspected intel officer wasn't alone. FBI surveillance teams reported that he was being accompanied by a Russian diplomat known to the FBI as the head of Soviet counterintelligence in San Francisco. The operation, Smith knew, was over—the presence of the Soviet spy boss meant that the FBI's target had reported the meeting to his superiors—but they had to go through with the meeting anyway. The two Soviet intelligence operatives walked into the office room. The undercover FBI agents, who knew the whole affair had turned farcical, greeted the Soviet counterintelligence chief.

"What," he replied, "You didn't expect me to come?"

We tend to think of espionage in the United States as an East Coast phenomenon: shadowy foreign spies working out of embassies in Washington, or at missions to the United Nations in New York; dead drops in suburban Virginia woodlands, and surreptitious meetings on park benches in Manhattan's gray dusk.

But foreign spies have been showing up uninvited to San Francisco and Silicon Valley for a very long time. According to former U.S. intelligence officials, that's true today more than ever. In fact, they warn—especially because of increasing Russian and Chinese aggressiveness, and the local concentration of world-leading science and technology firms—there's a full-on epidemic of espionage on the West Coast right now. And even more worrisome, many of its targets are unprepared to deal with the growing threat.

Unlike on the East Coast, foreign intel operations here aren't as focused on the hunt for diplomatic secrets, political intelligence or war plans. The open, experimental, cosmopolitan work and business culture of Silicon Valley in particular has encouraged a newer, "softer," "nontraditional" type of espionage, said former intelligence officials—efforts that mostly target trade secrets and technology. "It's a very subtle form of intelligence collection that is more business connected and oriented," one told me. But this economic espionage is also ubiquitous. Spies "are very much part of the everyday environment" here, said this person. Another former intelligence official told me that, at one point recently, a full 20 percent of all the FBI's active counterintelligence-related intellectual property cases had originated in the Bay Area. (The FBI declined to comment for this story.)

Political espionage happens here, too. China, for example, is certainly out to steal U.S. technology secrets, noted former intelligence officials, but it also is heavily invested in traditional political intelligence gathering, influence and perception-management operations in California. Former intelligence officials told me that Chinese intelligence once recruited a staff member at a California office of U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, and the source reported back to China about local politics. (A spokesperson for Feinstein said the

office doesn't comment on personnel matters or investigations, but noted that no Feinstein staffer in California has ever had a security clearance.) At the Aspen Security Forum last week, FBI director Chris Wray acknowledged the threat Chinese spying in particular poses, saying, "China from a counterintelligence perspective represents the broadest, most pervasive, most threatening challenge we face as a country."

Making it even more complicated, said multiple former U.S. intel officials, many foreign intel "collectors" in the Bay Area are not spies in the traditional sense of the term. They aren't based out of embassies or consulates, and may be associated with a state-owned business or research institute rather than an intelligence agency. Chinese officials, in particular, often cajole or outright threaten Chinese nationals (or U.S. citizens with family members in China) working or studying locally to provide them with valuable technological information.

"You get into situations where you have really good, really bright, conscientious people, twisted by their home government," said a chief security officer at a major cloud storage company that maintains sensitive government contracts. U.S.-based Chinese employees of this company have had Chinese government officials attempt to "leverage" these individuals' family members in China, this person told me. The company now requires employees working on certain projects to be U.S. citizens.

As Silicon Valley continues to take over the world, the local spy war will only get hotter—and the consequences will resonate far beyond Northern California.

And yet, it's not clear that the Bay Area—historically famous for its liberalism, and now infamous for its madcap capitalism—is prepared to handle this escalation and these new tactics. Tech firms, especially start-ups, lack incentives to report potential espionage to U.S. officials; and businesses and universities are often ignorant about the espionage threat, or so attuned to local political sensitivities they may fear being accused of stereotyping if they attempt to institute more stringent defensive security and screening measures.

As Silicon Valley continues to take over the world, the local spy war will only get hotter—and the consequences will resonate far beyond Northern California. This story is based on extensive conversations with more than half a dozen former intelligence community officials with direct knowledge of, or experience with, U.S. counterintelligence activities in the Bay Area. All requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters more openly. A few other individuals, all of whom worked counterintelligence in the Bay Area from the early 1970s through the mid-2000s, agreed to be interviewed on the record.

As one former senior intelligence official put it: "San Francisco is a trailblazer—you see the changes there in foreign counterintelligence first. Trends emerge there." If we

want to understand a world where Russia and China are ramping up their spy games against the United States, then we need to pay attention to what's happening in San Francisco.

Russian intelligence has had an intensive interest in San Francisco stretching back to the beginning of the Cold War. In those days, the Russians were primarily gathering information on local military installations, said former officials, including the Presidio, the strategically located former military base set on a wind-swept northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula, overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge.

Since then, Russian operations have become bolder, with one notable exception: the immediate post-Cold War period. "The only time there was a collective sigh regarding Russia, like maybe things have changed, was under Gorbachev," said LaRae Quy, who worked on Russian and Chinese counterintelligence in the Bay Area from 1985 to 2002. "We even put in a big 'Going Out Of Business' sign in the Palo Alto squad room."

But this optimism quickly faded when Putin was elected in 2000, recalled Quy, who retired in 2006. "Russia has been steadily escalating since then."

As the Bay Area transformed itself into a tech hub, Russia adapted its efforts accordingly, with Russian spies increasingly focused on obtaining information on valuable, sensitive or potentially dual-use technologies—those with both civilian and military applications—being developed or financed by companies or venture-capital firms based in the region. Russia's espionage activities have traditionally been centered on its San Francisco Consulate, which was forcibly closed by the Trump administration in early September 2017.

But even with the consulate shuttered, there are alternative vehicles for Russian intelligence-gathering in Silicon Valley. One potential mechanism, said three former intelligence officials, is Rusnano USA, the sole U.S. subsidiary of Rusnano, a Russian government-owned venture capital firm primarily focused on nanotechnology. Rusnano USA, which was founded in 2011, is located in Menlo Park, near Stanford University. "Some of the [potential intelligence-gathering] activities Rusnano USA was involved in were not only related to the acquisition of technology, but also inserting people into venture capital groups, in developing those relationships in Silicon Valley that allowed them to get their tentacles into everything," one former intelligence official told me. "And Rusnano USA was kind of the mechanism for that."

Rusnano's interests, said this former official, have extended to technology with both civilian and potential military applications. U.S. intelligence officials were very concerned about contacts between Rusnano USA employees and suspected Russian intelligence officers based at Russia's San Francisco Consulate and elsewhere, this person said.

"The Russians treated [Rusnano USA] as an intelligence platform, from which they launched operations," said another former U.S. intelligence official. (Rusnano USA and the Russian Embassy in Washington, did not respond to requests for comment.)

Russia also employs older, tried-and-true methods locally. Intel officials have suspected that Russian spies were enlisting local high-end Russian and Eastern European prostitutes, in a classic Russian "honeypot" maneuver, to gather information from (and on) Bay Area tech and venture-capital executives. Sex workers targeting executives at high-end bars and nightclubs such as the Rosewood Sand Hill, an ultra-luxury hotel located near many of Silicon Valley's top financial firms—infamous for its raucous, hook-up oriented Thursday nights—the Redwood Room, a tony bar located in the Clift Hotel in downtown San Francisco, and other spots have been identified as potentially reporting back to Russian intel officers, said another former official. "If I were a Russian intelligence officer, and I knew that these high-end girls were dragging CEOs of major companies back to their rooms, I'd be paying them for info too," said this person. "It's that whole idea of concentric rings: You don't need to be on the inside, you just need somebody on the inside that you have access to."

Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election has given Putin's regime an outsized role in the national conversation on espionage. But talk to former intel officials, and many will say that China poses an equal, if not greater, long-term threat. "The Chinese just have vast resources," said Kathleen Puckett, who worked counterintelligence in the Bay Area from 1979 to 2007. "They have all the time in the world, and all the patience in the world. Which is what you need more than anything." (China's Embassy in Washington, did not respond to requests for comment.)

Because of California's economic and political importance, as well as its large, well-established, and influential émigré and Chinese-American communities, the People's Republic places great weight on its intelligence activities here, said multiple former intelligence officials. Indeed, two told me that California is the only U.S. state to which the Ministry of State Security—China's main foreign intelligence agency—has had a dedicated unit, focused on political intelligence and influence operations. (China has had a similar unit for Washington.)

And if California is elevated among Chinese interests, San Francisco is like "nirvana" to the MSS, said one former official, because of the potential to target community leaders and local politicians who may later become mayors, governors or congressmen. Their efforts are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Sometimes these recruitment efforts have been successful. According to four former intelligence officials, in

the 2000s, a staffer in Senator Dianne Feinstein's San Francisco field office was reporting back to the MSS. While this person, who was a liaison to the local Chinese community, was fired, charges were never filed against him. (One former official reasoned this was because the staffer was providing political intelligence and not classified information—making prosecution far more difficult.) The suspected informant was "run" by officials based at China's San Francisco Consulate, said another former intelligence official. The spy's handler "probably got an award back in China" for his work, noted this former official, dryly.

Or take the case of Rose Pak. Pak, who died in September 2016, was for decades one of San Francisco's preeminent political power brokers. Though she never held elective office, she was famous for making and unmaking mayors, city councilmen (or "supervisors," as they're known in San Francisco), and pushing city contracts to her allies and constituents in Chinatown.

According to four former intelligence officials, there were widespread concerns that Pak had been co-opted by Chinese intelligence, and was wielding influence over San Francisco politics in ways purposefully beneficial to the Chinese government. Another worry, U.S. officials said, was Pak's role in organizing numerous junkets to China, sometimes led by Pak in person and attended (often multiple times) by many prominent Bay Area politicians, including former San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, who died while in office in 2017. Political junkets are used by Chinese intelligence for surveillance ("every single hotel room is bugged," one former official told me) and collection purposes, as well as for spotting and assessing potential recruits, said former intel officials. (There is no indication that Pak herself participated in, or had knowledge of, specific intelligence-gathering efforts.) Concerns about Pak's links to the Chinese Communist Party occasionally percolated into local political debate, but the intelligence community's identification of Pak as a likely agent of influence for Beijing is being reported here for the first time.

Occasionally, Chinese intelligence activities in San Francisco burst into plain view. Consider the story—and it is an incredible one, also told here for the first time—of the 2008 Olympic Torch Run. San Francisco was the only U.S. city to host the Olympic torch as it made its way, tortuously, to Beijing. And Chinese officials were very concerned about disruptions to the run by protesters, as well as in managing the image China projected to the rest of the world in the run-up to the games.

So they decided to leave nothing to chance. According to three former intelligence officials, Chinese MSS and Ministry of Public Security (MPS) officers flew in to San Francisco from abroad for the occasion, joining suspected MSS officers based in the Bay Area. (At the time, the diplomat responsible for Overseas Chinese Affairs at China's

San Francisco Consulate was a suspected MSS officer, said two of these former officials.) U.S. officials watched as Chinese intelligence officers filmed Tibetan monks on their march across the Golden Gate Bridge, and known Chinese spies surveilled a pro-Tibet rally downtown featuring Desmond Tutu and Richard Gere. Chinese spies also recorded participants in a Falun Gong rally in Union Square, and shot footage of protestors at the torch run itself.

Most brazenly, said former intelligence agents, Chinese officials bussed in 6,000-8,000 J-Visa holding students—threatening them with the loss of Chinese government funding—from across California to disrupt Falun Gong, Tibetan, Uighur and pro-democracy protesters. (They even provided these students with a box lunch.) “I’m not sure they would have pulled out these stops in any other city, but San Francisco is special” to China, said a former senior U.S. official.

Counterintelligence officers possessed advance knowledge about some aspects of this operation and observed Chinese intelligence officers, who often wore earpieces connected to a radio, managing the movements of counterprotesters, directing blocs of pro-PRC students to intimidate, disrupt and overwhelm anti-Beijing protesters across the parade route. Chinese intelligence officers would “communicate with each other, and say, ‘We’ve got three Tibetan monks about to do a reading on Pier 39—I need you to move bloc A and bloc B to that location so we can drown them out,’” recalled another former official. “So they’d move these groups around to prevent any protests along the Embarcadero.”

“We got pissed off,” said the same former intelligence official, because the Chinese “were interfering with the free expression of opinion” at the torch relay—their operation was, in essence, an effort by a hostile foreign intelligence service to forcibly suppress First Amendment activities in a major American city.

Disagreements between the FBI and the State Department, which counseled a more restrained approach, prevented U.S. intelligence personnel from interfering directly in Chinese activities during the torch run itself, said this former intel official. (The State Department said it does not comment on intelligence matters.) The same source noted that U.S. intelligence officials did, however, pass information about the torch run to their Australian counterparts—the torch was later scheduled to pass through Canberra—which denied visas to some of the Chinese intelligence officers responsible for the melee in San Francisco.

Chinese intelligence has long focused on surveilling, and attempting to control, Chinese nationals studying abroad. One well-documented mechanism for this effort has been the use of Chinese Students and Scholars Associations groups on university campuses. The connectivity between individual campus CSSAs and local Chinese diplomatic facilities varies.

Some groups are unreceptive to the intercession or influence of Chinese government officials, but many consider themselves to be under the direct “guidance” of their local consulate or embassy, receiving funds from these institutions. “Intelligence officers in diplomatic facilities are the primary point of contact for students in CSSAs,” said one former official.

But some of these links between these student groups and Chinese officials are covert, and even coercive. In one case in the mid-2000s in the Midwest, a student affiliated with a CSSA reported another Chinese student’s contact with the FBI to an MSS officer operating under diplomatic cover in Chicago, said a former intelligence official. The student was quickly flown out of the country. And, roughly half a decade ago in the Bay Area, counterintelligence officials believed that a graduate student affiliated with the Berkeley CSSA was working for the MSS, and reporting on the activities of other Chinese students on campus, said another former official.

When it comes to economic espionage in particular, Chinese intelligence employs a more decentralized strategy than Russia does, former intelligence officials told me. China draws from a much larger population pool to achieve its objectives—using opportunistic businessmen, ardent nationalists, students, travelers and others alike. One former intelligence official likened China’s approach to an “Oklahoma land rush”—an attempt to grab as much targeted proprietary technology or IP as possible, as quickly as possible, through as many channels as possible.

Chinese intelligence also undertakes very intentional efforts to recruit insiders placed within organizations whose technologies they are interested in, said the same former intelligence official. “They are very good at softly recruiting people, and taking advantage of vulnerabilities”—including via threats—and they are very patient in putting different parts of it together. We’ve seen them repeatedly save money and time that the U.S. spends on research and development.”

The July 2018 arrest of Silicon Valley-based Apple employee Xiaolang Zhang, who allegedly stole proprietary information about Apple’s self-driving car program to benefit his new employer, a China-based competitor, appears to fit this pattern. (Zhang was charged with theft of trade secrets and has not been accused of any espionage-related crimes. He maintains his innocence.)

China “[puts] all their efforts into espionage, and get everything for free,” said Kathleen Puckett, a former longtime counterintelligence officer in the Bay Area.

The case of Walter Liew, a Bay Area local who was found guilty in 2014 of selling a highly valuable proprietary pigmentation formula owned by DuPont to a state-owned Chinese conglomerate, is a clearer example.

Liew was found guilty of violating the Economic Espionage Act, a landmark 1996 federal law that

strengthened penalties for trade theft benefiting a foreign government. San Francisco has played an outsized role in cases involving this law. In fact, the first conviction under the act occurred in San Francisco, in 2006; as did the first sentencing under the law, in 2008; as did the first jury conviction—of Liew himself—in 2014. All three cases involved China.

The Chinese have pursued this strategy “brilliantly” for years, said Puckett. “They put all their efforts into espionage, and get everything for free.”

Chinese cyberespionage operations have also targeted a number of Silicon Valley-based technology giants. During a number of attacks, two former intelligence officials told me, Chinese intelligence immediately sought the files of U.S. companies’ legal counsel or other legal documentation, to access Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act warrants or National Security Letters previously issued to these institutions. In other words, the paramount Chinese interest was finding out the extent of the U.S. officials’ knowledge about China’s own intelligence operatives—and in adjusting their behavior accordingly. “If in fact the person in question was Chinese intelligence,” said this former official, “they could then alter their approach.” This strategy began being observed during a hack of Google, said two former officials, that occurred about a decade ago.

While China and Russia demand the lion’s share of counterintelligence resources in the Bay Area, a number of friendly intelligence services are also active in Silicon Valley, said former intelligence officials. South Korea, according to one, has become “formidable” in the realm of economic espionage, with particular sophistication in cyberespionage. U.S. officials have had to issue “stern warnings” to South Korea to “stop hacking” within the United States, said this person. (The South Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., did not respond to requests for comment.)

Israel is also active in the Bay Area—but it’s complicated. According to one former intelligence official, Israel has “a culture that facilitates and encourages acquisition of targeted companies”—in other words, it will use information it has gathered locally to cajole or incentivize private Israeli firms to purchase specific start-ups or other Silicon Valley-based tech companies. Throughout the 2000s, said former officials, French intelligence employed a similar strategy.

In an email response, a spokesperson for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., wrote that “the allegations are totally untrue and downright ridiculous. Israel does not conduct espionage in the United States.” A spokesperson for the French Embassy declined to comment.

There is disagreement, however, within the U.S. intelligence community about the amount of resources that should be devoted to what is, in essence, a “soft” form of spying by U.S. allies. “I get they try to get advantages from

economic espionage,” said another former senior intelligence official, “but is French espionage worth that much emotional discharge, given what the Russians are up to?”

There’s another big challenge to doing counterintelligence work in the Bay Area, say these officials: getting the cooperation of local private-sector actors, especially in tech. Indeed, said former intelligence officials, not only do many cases of economic espionage not reach the prosecution stage here, they often go unreported entirely.

This has been a longstanding source of friction in the Valley. “The biggest problem we had—really, seriously—with a lot of these companies is that they wouldn’t prosecute,” said Larae Quy, the former Palo Alto-based FBI counterintelligence agent who retired in 2006. “They would have an employee sell technology to, say, the Russians or the Chinese, and rather than let their stockholders or investors know about it, they just let it walk. So, we’ve caught the guy, or we have information and we’d like to take it to the next level, and they don’t want to push it because of the bad press that gets out. It’s the most frustrating thing in the world.”

Silicon Valley firms continue to downplay, or outright conceal, the extent to which the theft of trade secrets and other acts of economic espionage occur, said multiple former officials. “Coming forward and saying you didn’t have controls in place—that totally impacts shareholder or investor value,” noted one former intelligence official. “Especially when you’re dealing with startups or mid-level companies that are looking for funding, that’s a big deal. You’re basically announcing to the world, especially if you’re potentially going forward with a public trial, that you were not able to protect your information.”

The open, start-up culture in the Bay Area has also complicated U.S. counterintelligence efforts, said former officials, because Russian and Chinese operatives have an easier time infiltrating organizations without any security systems or hierarchies in place. These services like penetrating young companies and start-ups, noted one former official, because “it’s always better to get in at the ground floor” when seeking to pilfer valuable information or technology.

The exorbitant cost of living in Silicon Valley, however, means that opportunities for tech employees—and potential spies or co-optees—to “get in at the ground floor” are becoming increasingly uncommon. The tech industry, chasing talent and lower overhead, is now spread more widely across the country than ever before. And this diffusion will create new vulnerabilities. Consequently, places like Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Boulder, Colorado—both midsized cities with thriving tech industries—will likely see an uptick in counterintelligence cases. (One former intelligence official noted that the FBI’s office in Austin, Texas, has built up its counterintelligence capacities.)

But spies will never leave Silicon Valley. As the region's global clout grows, so will its magnet-like attraction for the world's spooks. As one former U.S. intelligence official put it, spies are pulled toward the Bay Area "like moths to the light." And the region will help define the struggle for global preeminence—especially between the United States and China—for decades to come.

Zach Dorfman is senior fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.

Russian-spy Hookers Targeting Tech Leaders In Silicon Valley?

By Ethan Baron

[San Jose \(CA\) Mercury News](#), July 27, 2018

Suspected Russian "honeypot" prostitutes targeting tech execs and VCs in an infamous Silicon Valley lounge provide a salacious illustration of the region's spy problem — but much of the espionage here looks like business as usual, according to a new report.

The West Coast is seeing a "full-on epidemic of espionage" centered largely on Silicon Valley's technology industry, the report said.

A former U.S. intelligence official told online magazine Politico that local Russian and East European prostitutes may be getting money from Russia to target high-powered techies and VCs at the posh Rosewood hotel's lounge on Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park, a drinking establishment known for so-called "cougar nights" on Thursdays.

"Sex workers targeting executives at high-end bars and nightclubs such as the Rosewood Sand Hill ... and other spots have been identified as potentially reporting back to Russian intel officers," the former official said, according to Politico.

The Rosewood, in a statement, disputed the report.

"Rosewood Sand Hill holds itself to the highest standards and does not tolerate illegal or immoral activity," the statement Friday said.

"The statements made in the Politico article regarding our hotel are unfounded and without validity. We will continue to maintain the highest levels of security as we always have to ensure the safety, privacy and integrity of our guests and local patrons."

Get tech news in your inbox weekday mornings. Sign up for the free Good Morning Silicon Valley newsletter.

China takes a more decentralized approach than Russia to spying here, according to Politico, which said it based its report on "extensive conversations with more than half a dozen former intelligence community officials with direct knowledge of, or experience with, U.S. counterintelligence activities in the Bay Area."

In order to "grab as much targeted proprietary technology or (intellectual property) as possible, as quickly as

possible," China uses "opportunistic businessmen, ardent nationalists, students, travelers" and others, Politico reported.

"Chinese intelligence also undertakes very intentional efforts to recruit insiders placed within organizations whose technologies they are interested in," a former intelligence official told Politico, according to the magazine.

The purported intrusion of Chinese agents into everyday Silicon Valley business echoes allegations in a recently filed lawsuit alleging a Santa Clara subsidiary of Chinese smartphone giant Huawei infiltrated a meeting at a telecommunications summit held at Facebook. Huawei, accused of espionage by some U.S. intelligence officials, has denied that the company or its products are a security threat to the U.S.

Tech companies have a strong incentive to keep quiet when they've been victimized by spies, Politico reported. Silicon Valley companies "downplay, or outright conceal" the extent of trade-secrets theft and corporate espionage, former intelligence officials said.

"Coming forward and saying you didn't have controls in place — that totally impacts shareholder or investor value," a former intelligence official told Politico.

"Especially when you're dealing with startups or mid-level companies that are looking for funding, that's a big deal. You're basically announcing to the world, especially if you're potentially going forward with a public trial, that you were not able to protect your information."

TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS

Dearborn Man Charged With Aiding IS Consents To Detention

[Associated Press](#), July 27, 2018

DETROIT (AP) — A 28-year-old Detroit-area man captured on a Syrian battlefield and charged with providing support to the Islamic State group has agreed to remain in jail pending trial.

Ibraheem Musaibli consented to detention during a brief hearing Friday in federal court.

Musaibli appeared in his orange jail garb, shackled and handcuffed. He said he understood the charges against him and entered a plea of not guilty.

The government says Musaibli was captured by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces and was flown to the U.S. this week. The Dearborn native is accused of working for IS for three years.

Musaibli's family has said he isn't an IS fighter.

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Man Charged In Milwaukee Shooting Plot Released Until Trial

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A federal judge ordered the release of a man charged in a mass shooting plot in downtown Milwaukee until his trial next month.

WITI-TV reports that as a condition of this release granted Friday, Samy Hamzeh must have GPS monitoring and be confined to a home until his trial on Aug 21.

Hamzeh was arrested in 2016 on two counts of possessing a machine gun and one count of possessing a silencer, which he bought from undercover FBI agents. Federal prosecutors allege he was planning to kill at least 30 people at a Masonic center to “defend Islam.”

Federal public defenders say their client repeatedly protested the informants’ proposals and that he only wanted a legal handgun to protect himself.

Information from: WITI-TV, <http://www.fox6now.com>

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Milwaukee Mass Shooting Plot: Defendant Wins Release

By Rick Barrett

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), July 28, 2018

A U.S. District Court Judge has ordered the release of a Milwaukee man accused of illegally possessing machine guns sold to him by undercover FBI agents.

Samy Hamzeh, 25, had already been in jail for about 30 months — roughly the sentence he’d face if convicted of the charges stemming from January 2016 — when police said he planned to shoot dozens of people at the Humphrey Scottish Rite Masonic Center in downtown Milwaukee.

Judges on three previous occasions denied his release pending trial.

The government blamed the delay in trial on the complexity of the case and the many motions filed by the defense.

The case is based on months of recorded conversations, in Arabic, between Hamzeh and two informants working for the FBI.

The FBI said Hamzeh’s arrest thwarted a planned mass shooting “to defend Islam” at the former Masonic center in downtown Milwaukee.

His lawyers argued entrapment as a defense. And they noted that he was a U.S. citizen with no criminal record, family in the area, solid work history and a job awaiting him.

With his off-postponed trial set for August, Hamzeh’s lawyers had argued for his release from jail, saying it was a constitutional violation to hold him so long without bond.

U.S. Magistrate Pamela Pepper ordered Hamzeh’s release pending trial.

“The defendant must appear in court as required and, if convicted, must surrender as directed to serve a sentence that the court may impose,” U.S. Magistrate William Duffin wrote in an order Friday setting the conditions of release.

Hamzeh was ordered to surrender his U.S. and Jordan passports. He was placed on home detention and must be monitored by a GPS tracking system.

He was ordered not to possess a firearm or other weapon and not to have any contact with government witnesses.

Earlier, U.S. Magistrate David Jones ordered that U.S. Marshals could take Hamzeh from the Kenosha County Jail to his lawyers’ office in the federal courthouse twice a week to help prepare for trial. He would have to remain shackled at the legs but could have his handcuffs off with lawyers.

Inside Al Qaeda: Living And Working With Terrorists

[CBS News](#), July 29, 2018

Tonight, an unprecedented interview with an undercover FBI operative who secretly lives and works among the terrorists of ISIS and al Qaeda. His name is a national secret. But in 2012, al Qaeda knew him as Tamer Elnoury. They thought he was a wealthy Arab-American with seething anger at the United States. But as we first reported in October, in reality he had dedicated himself to the war on terror the morning of 9/11.

“Tamer Elnoury” works for the FBI’s National Security Covert Operations Unit

Devoted to Islam and America, comfortable working alone amid killers, he was a rare find for the FBI’s undercover counterterrorism group.

60 Minutes correspondent Scott Pelley and FBI-undercover operative “Tamer Elnoury” at the 9/11 Memorial, formerly known as ground zero

Elnoury spent 12 years as an undercover cop before being recruited by the FBI. He is employed by another law enforcement agency but has been assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York, where he works undercover for the FBI’s National Security Covert Operations Unit.

Tamer Elnoury: It’s called the National Security Covert Operations Unit.

Scott Pelley: And what do the guys in the unit call it?

Tamer Elnoury: It’s not the guys, it’s me. I jokingly referred to it as the Dirty Arabs group.

Scott Pelley: The Dirty Arabs group?

Tamer Elnoury: Yes.

Scott Pelley: Your bosses must have loved that.

Dark humor is part of his trade. He writes in a new book, called "American Radical," about infiltrating terrorist groups at home and abroad. He wrote the book, he told us, so fellow Americans could understand how the Islam he knows is tortured by terrorists trying to justify mayhem. We disguised him and changed his voice so he could tell us about one of the biggest investigations of his career. The target was a 30-year-old Tunisian who was working toward a PhD at a Canadian university. It was in 2012 that routine surveillance of Chiheb Esseghaier's phone calls and travels gave Canadian intelligence and the FBI reasons to worry.

"Elnoury" appears in disguise for an interview with 60 Minutes correspondent Scott Pelley
CBS News

Tamer Elnoury: Chiheb was talking to some really bad folks overseas. He made two trips to Iran. And a handful of other intelligence gathering evidence that was presented to us led us to believe that we needed to figure out who he was.

Esseghaier had a visa to attend an academic conference in the United States so the FBI wanted Tamer Elnoury to dangle himself as bait just in case Esseghaier was recruiting for al Qaeda.

Scott Pelley: What did you do then?

Tamer Elnoury: I crafted my legend and made myself recruitable. I wanted him to choose me. I wanted him to go to bed that night wondering what he could do to become my friend.

His legend, or false biography, was that of a wealthy Arab-American real-estate investor with a painful, private grudge.

Scott Pelley: How did you meet?

Tamer Elnoury: We met on a flight from Houston to San Jose, California.

Scott Pelley: Not by accident?

Tamer Elnoury: We met on the flight from Houston to San Jose, California.

That planned, "accidental" meeting, in June 2012, is called a "bump," as in, bumping into someone. They boarded as strangers and fate did the rest.

Tamer Elnoury: People were in his seat. People were in my seat. It was a legitimate mix up. And as I was talking to the flight attendant, he noticed that I had a long beard, that I looked Middle Eastern. And probably was a Muslim. So he poked his head over and he said, Batakalem Arabyi which means, "Do you speak Arabic," in Arabic. I said, Taba'an, Assalmu alaikum wa rahmat'Allahi wa barakatu And he looked at me and he said, Wa-alaikum assalaam wa-rahmat'Allah, "I knew it." And then the conversation proceeded in Arabic. He then turned to the other flight attendant and said, "We must sit together." He insisted. He chose me.

Scott Pelley: The whole key to the thing is to make it their idea?

Tamer Elnoury: That's correct.

Scott Pelley: What is the process that you go through to get into one of these roles?

Tamer Elnoury: It starts that morning that I'm traveling, assuming I'm traveling covertly, in alias. I take a shower and I put on, for this case, I put on Tamer's clothes. I put on Tamer's watch, his shoes. I drive Tamer's car. His wallet's in my pocket. His phone is on me. And I drive to the beach. And I sit at the beach and I talk to myself out loud like a crazy person, reciting everything there is to know about Tamer Elnoury, his company, his family, his legend, over and over.

The FBI created a history for Tamer Elnoury; an online presence, an actual office for his investment company where a receptionist answered the phone. There were ownership records, a home, fake IDs...

CBS News

And, critical to the legend, there was a fake personal tragedy. Elnoury's false background said his mother died of neglect in a U.S. hospital because of anti-Muslim discrimination. That lie completed the picture of a wealthy Arab American with a reason to hate. Chiheb Esseghaier thought his new friend was 'made to order'—which, of course, he was.

For 10 months, the men drew close. Esseghaier twisted the Koran to justify attacking the West. He admitted his trips to Iran were for meetings with a senior al Qaeda leader. Surveillance showed Esseghaier was checking Tamer Elnoury's back story. And one night, in a basement in Toronto, Elnoury was grilled by Esseghaier and three accomplices.

Tamer Elnoury: "What do you do? How do you do it? Is it commercial real estate? Is it residential? What do you do when you fly here? What do you do here?" It sounded like an interrogation.

This interrogation was so sharp, Elnoury feared his cover had been blown. He analyzed the room, in case he had to escape.

Scott Pelley: But the cop within you had figured out where the exit was and had decided what order he was going to shoot the people in the room if it came to that?

Tamer Elnoury: Oh, absolutely. At that point, as you get older and slower, you realize you always go for the young ones first.

Scott Pelley: Which leads me to ask, in all seriousness, where does the courage come from?

Tamer Elnoury: I can make the argument that you're probably more in danger crossing the street here in New York City, than I am when I'm embedded in an al Qaeda cell. If my legend holds up, I am worth so much more to them, safe. They protect me more than they protect their own. Because Tamer Elnoury means access to the West.

He passed that grilling and was enlisted in what al Qaeda hoped would be its long frustrated encore to 9/11.

Tamer Elnoury: He was planning on derailing a train from New York City to Toronto.

Scott Pelley: How was he gonna do that?

Tamer Elnoury: Well, that changed multiple times. It was either, break up the tracks, use explosives the bottom line was that train was getting derailed over a bridge that has little water as possible to ensure the deaths of everyone on that train.

Scott Pelley: Was this just some kind of pipe dream?

Tamer Elnoury: No, that was his tasking from al Qaeda.

The VIA Rail train carries hundreds of passengers from New York to Toronto. In September 2012, Esseghaier, Elnoury and another man cased this bridge, near Toronto, the scene of the planned attack. As a surveillance team watched overhead, Elnoury recorded Chiheb Esseghaier explaining how the disaster would unfold.

Scott Pelley: It would seem that you have plenty to arrest Chiheb on at this point. Why does the investigation keep going?

Tamer Elnoury: Because Chiheb revealed to me that there was an American sleeper. He told me that there was an American version of him. And that although he didn't know who he was, he was told by his trainers, al Qaeda senior leadership, that they would put the two of them together when the time was right.

Scott Pelley: There was an al Qaeda American agent inside the United States?

Tamer Elnoury: That's what Chiheb believed. And I believed him.

The possibility of an al Qaeda agent in America took the investigation in a new direction. Tamer Elnoury lured Esseghaier to New York City in the hope of developing leads. Esseghaier asked Elnoury to show him the sights, including Times Square.

Tamer Elnoury: He didn't see Times Square the way a foreigner would. He saw it as an opportunity to kill Americans.

An opportunity, Esseghaier suggested, for a future New Year's Eve, when more than 100 thousand people would fill the streets.

Tamer Elnoury: Multiple explosions that were timed about five to 10 seconds apart. As one went off, he thought about where the crowd would then run to. And that's where he wanted the next bomb to go off. Maximum carnage, maximum casualties.

Scott Pelley: He expected to get away with derailing the train so that he could go on to Times Square next?

Tamer Elnoury: Exactly. Chiheb said that al Qaeda shifted gears. After 9/11, they lost some of their best minds. No more martyrdom. It was maximum casualties, minimum exposure. That was their mindset. And they didn't want to lose soldiers anymore, people with access to the West. So do you what you can and get out, hide, and do it again.

After his visit to Times Square, Esseghaier wanted to see where the Twin Towers had fallen.

Tamer Elnoury: And as he was rubbing his beard and his arm was around me, he said, "Tamer, this place needs another 9/11 and we're gonna give it to 'em." I saw red at that moment. It was the hardest time in my career to stay professional. Here I am on hallowed ground and he said that to me. At that very moment, I could feel a pen in the pocket of my jacket. I envisioned stabbing him in the eye and dropping him dead right where he stood.

Scott Pelley: You very nearly blew your cover?

Tamer Elnoury: Yes, sir. Yes, well, it's part of what we do, though. We pretend to be someone we loath while hanging out with people we hate. Maybe it was the culmination of everything that was happening, the stress and pressure of identifying the sleeper. Chiheb's rants about the West, whatever. But the point was I almost broke that night. But thankfully for the case, I didn't.

The FBI wanted more time but, in April 2013, the Boston Marathon was attacked. One week later, the Canadian government insisted on wrapping up its al Qaeda cell. Chiheb Esseghaier and the accomplice on the bridge were tried, convicted and sentenced to life. But the trail to the American sleeper, if he existed, went cold.

Tamer Elnoury: There hasn't been a day since April 22nd, 2013, when I've woken up, no matter where I am that I don't think about the American sleeper.

Tamer Elnoury's book, *American Radical*, was cleared for publication after an FBI review. He has stepped away from undercover work for now but he's still on the job, consulting with the bureau and training others for covert assignments.

Undercover: An FBI Operative In Disguise On 60 Minutes

By Jacqueline Kalil

[CBS News](#), July 29, 2018

Tamer Elnoury – the bearded man in the video above – is dead.

Well, not the man himself, but the FBI alias that Elnoury has used for several years has been retired, and 60 Minutes will not reveal his true identity. That's a national secret.

"Tamer Elnoury is one of dozens of cover names that he's used in his job working undercover for the FBI, doing terrorism cases, covering al Qaeda and ISIS" with the FBI's National Security Covert Operations Unit, says 60 Minutes producer Henry Schuster, who produced this week's story about Elnoury, "Inside al Qaeda."

The alias was retired after Elnoury testified in a 2015 trial in Toronto against two al Qaeda terrorists, Chiheb Esseghaier and Raed Jaser. Extreme measures were taken by the judge to protect Elnoury's safety and true identity.

"When the case in Canada went to trial, he testified for three weeks and the courtroom was cleared except for the attorneys, the jury, the judge, and him and the defendants," Schuster says. "The reporters listened in an adjoining room, and they signed agreements that they would not record his voice in any circumstance."

In order for 60 Minutes to protect Elnoury's identity, his face was altered through hours of meticulous special effects makeup, done by a company called Prosthetic Renaissance. 60 Minutes had worked with the company in 2012, when Scott Pelley interviewed a Navy SEAL, in disguise, about the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound.

The video player above shows Mike Marino, owner of Prosthetic Renaissance, finishing Elnoury's disguise.

The process started weeks before, when a mold was made of Elnoury's face, and the resulting mask was used to guide the makeup artists in determining how to best alter his appearance.

"It's not, like, a 'Mission Impossible' mask that you just fold on the face and lift off," says Rachael Morehouse, associate producer of "Inside al Qaeda." "It's different pieces. You're changing the shape and the structure of the face with these different little elements that they're putting on."

As an undercover FBI operative in the field, Elnoury never disguised his face. Instead, he would take on new identities with invented histories and back stories that the FBI calls creating a "legend."

Elnoury was already an undercover cop working drug and corruption cases when the FBI started using him. They assigned him to the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York and sent him to undercover school to prepare for his work penetrating al Qaeda and, later, ISIS.

Acting lessons helped Elnoury play his undercover parts convincingly. Elnoury says he balked when the FBI told him that he and other undercovers were going to enroll in a Hollywood acting studio, but Elnoury came to see how it transformed his "undercover game," allowing him to "draw on emotions that are already within," he tells correspondent Scott Pelley.

"[Acting teacher Howard Fine] helped us focus on characters where our legends came to life with real emotion. I have no doubt his training saved my life as much as training I got from the FBI," Elnoury wrote in his recent book *American Radical*.

In 2012, the FBI tasked Elnoury with investigating Chiheb Essegheier, a suspected terrorist, who Canadian Intelligence and the FBI believed was recruiting for al Qaeda.

The two met on a flight from Houston to San Jose, California. During the flight, Elnoury sought to make himself appear recruitable to al Qaeda, and it worked. Over a period of 10 months, Elnoury befriended Essegheier, getting him to disclose that he was meeting with senior al Qaeda leaders in

Iran; and reveal that he was planning an attack on a train outside Toronto.

In the video below, Elnoury tells Scott Pelley how he got Essegheier to trust and believe him by drawing on his acting skills, describing to the terrorist how his own radicalization began as a result of the death of his mother.

So why would an undercover FBI operative—a man who has spent a career protecting and masking his identity—write a book and agree to a 60 Minutes interview? Elnoury tells Scott Pelley that he wants people to understand "the differences between radical Islam and the true tenets of the religion."

"We're not at war with Islam. We're at war with radicals," he says, "I am a Muslim. I am an American. And I've been serving my country for 22 years and counting. And I am appalled at what these animals are doing to my country while desecrating my religion."

Schuster says Elnoury "feels incredibly strongly" about putting his life and career on the line to tell his story because "it's very important for him to let people know that [terrorism] is not Islam."

The FBI conducted a "threat assessment" to make sure Elnoury's true identity was safe and secure after the publication of his book and this 60 Minutes interview. But for now, Elnoury has decided to focus on helping others train for undercover assignments.

"I'm confident that even if I never get in front of another subject again in an undercover capacity, I still have a few good years left in me," he says, "and there's a lot that I can do in this work right now."

These videos were originally published on October 22, 2017.

Blumenthal Seeks Declassification Of Last 9/11 Documents

[Associated Press](#), July 28, 2018

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut says he plans to introduce a resolution that calls for declassifying all remaining documents related to the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The Democrat is scheduled to appear Monday at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford with survivors and families of the 9/11 victims. Blumenthal contends the documents may reveal unknown connections between the terrorists and foreign nations.

Brett Eagleson of Middletown, who was 15 when his father Bruce was killed in the attack on the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York, is scheduled to be on hand.

In April, his and other families announced plans to step up pressure to compel the CIA, the FBI and others to turn

over information that could shed light on potential complicity by Saudi Arabia.

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Plano Teen Indicted After Alleged ISIS-inspired Plot To 'Cast Terror Into Your Hearts' With Frisco Mall Shooting

By Valerie Wigglesworth

[Dallas Morning News](#), July 27, 2018

A Plano teen accused of plotting an ISIS-inspired mass shooting at Frisco's Stonebriar Centre mall was indicted by a grand jury Thursday.

Matin Azizi-Yarand, 17, is charged with solicitation to commit capital murder of a peace officer and making a terroristic threat, according to the grand jury results released Friday afternoon. He has been in custody since his May arrest at Plano West Senior High School. His bail is set at \$3 million.

The teen "made clear that his attack would be on behalf of ISIS," according to detailed affidavits related to his arrest. ISIS is an acronym for the Islamic State group.

His attorney, Mitch Nolte, said in an email that the indictment marks the beginning of what will probably be "a long and difficult process for everyone."

"While it's never a good thing to see your client get indicted for such serious crimes, we are relieved that we can now start litigating the case in court," Nolte said. "The state will have to show us all the evidence they claim to have on this 17-year-old boy in order for us to conduct our own independent investigation."

Matin Azizi-Yarand, 17, of Plano was booked into the Collin County Detention Center on Wednesday, May 2, 2018. Bail is set at \$3 million.

Azizi-Yarand allegedly planned the attack in a series of online messages over five months with people who turned out to be FBI confidential sources and an undercover FBI employee.

He stated in those messages that he learned from ISIS magazines that a high death toll will get people's attention but just as important is "something that will cost them a lot financially."

As part of his plot, Azizi-Yarand sent more than \$1,400 in cash and a prepaid card through the mail so his sources could buy automatic rifles, ammunition and tactical gear, authorities allege. The teen studied mall security and discussed his desire to kill police.

Court records allege he wrote a "message to America" explaining his reasons for the attack, including that it would be "revenge for ours who were slaughtered."

"You want your easy lives in America so we will cast terror into your hearts as Allah commanded us," his message allegedly stated.

At one point Azizi-Yarand talked about waiting until he turned 18 in November so he could buy a rifle himself. But as the conversations continued, he opted to send money so his sources could buy what was needed. He told them he was afraid that any purchases he made would tip off his mom, who tracked his finances.

In an April 18 message, the teen allegedly stated: "My rifle needs to be pretty and cool looking // put an I love America sticky on the side."

Plano teen arrested in ISIS-inspired plot to commit mass shooting at Frisco's Stonebriar mall

Under Texas law, Azizi-Yarand is considered an adult at age 17. His case will be prosecuted by the Collin County District Attorney's Office with help from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Texas.

The solicitation charge is a first-degree felony punishable by five years to life in prison. The terroristic threat charge is a third-degree felony punishable by two to 10 years in prison.

The case is being investigated by Plano and Frisco police and the FBI.

The teen allegedly wanted to attack during Ramadan to limit the number of Muslim casualties. Ramadan is Islam's holiest month and includes prayers, fasting from dawn to dusk and nightly feasts. This year's observance started May 15.

In a message in March, he told one of his sources, "I'm not getting martyr'd [sic] without you."

Plano teen suspected in plotting ISIS-inspired attack called fellow students 'sitting ducks'

Beginning in December 2017, Azizi-Yarand began communicating online with "an FBI confidential human source" about his desire to either "make hijrah [travel]" or to do a terrorist attack within the United States, according to the affidavit.

In a Jan. 29 message, he said he had settled on a local attack. "Are you fine with killing some Americans," the affidavit quoted him saying.

His messages with the confidential sources included references to mass shootings in Paris, Las Vegas, New York and Parkland, Fla. At one point, the teen told his sources, "how hard can it be to spray down a big crowd of people."

The teen also considered shooting fellow students at school, authorities said. On April 20, Azizi-Yarand sent photos of students to the FBI undercover employee and described them as "sitting ducks," according to one affidavit.

On April 14, authorities allege, Azizi-Yarand met with one of the confidential sources at a hotel near the Frisco mall. At the teen's suggestion, the pair walked to Stonebriar Centre

and surveyed the crowded shopping center, talking about their plan.

Among his goals for the attack, according to the affidavit, were to send a message to disbelievers and to inspire others. The affidavit alleges he wrote: "We followed what Allah commanded us and filled them with fear."

Grand Jury Indicts Teen In Mall Terror Plot « CBS Dallas / Fort Worth

[KTVT-TV Dallas](#), July 27, 2018

PLANO, Texas (CBSDFW.COM) — A Collin County grand jury has indicted 17-year-old Plano West Sr. High School student Matin Azizi-Yarand Friday for charges related to an alleged terror plot targeting Stonebriar Mall in Frisco. He has been in jail since his arrest in May.

Yarand was arrested during an undercover operation by the Collin County District Attorney's Office and FBI which thwarted the plot.

Azizi-Yarand was said to have spent \$1,400 on weapons and tactical gear for his attack.

Law enforcement officials obtained the Plano West Senior High School student's "manifesto" earlier this year in which he allegedly pledged allegiance to ISIS. Authorities said that Azizi-Yarand was also trying to solicit others into joining him on the mass shooting spree, though affidavits suggest that he wanted to be a "lone wolf."

According to an affidavit released in May, the case began in December 2017 when Azizi-Yarand started communicating with an FBI source in a mobile messaging app. It is here that Azizi-Yarand allegedly expressed his desire to commit an attack, adding that he had been reading ISIS guides for "performing operations and making bombs."

Azizi-Yarand had reportedly also been reviewing a guide to making pipe bombs which was authored by Eric Harris, one of the attackers in the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School.

"This case exemplifies the wide reach terrorist groups have through social media and other means," said Chief Gregory Rushin of the Plano Police Department, "to radicalize others in communities across our country."

In his earliest conversations with the FBI's source, Azizi-Yarand allegedly said, "It is not about how many kills, but how much money you will make these countries spend in security just for a simple attack... although having a high number will get their attention."

"I want to put America in the state that Europe is in, which is having to have soldiers deployed in streets," Azizi-Yarand added, according to an affidavit. "Something that will cost them a lot financially too."

In multiple conversations with the FBI's source, Azizi-Yarand allegedly said that he hoped to travel to Pakistan, and then cross the border into Afghanistan in order to officially join

ISIS. He also allegedly said that he would use the mobile messaging app to find others who could help him with an attack.

Azizi-Yarand invited the FBI source to Dallas late last year. "There is a Hindu temple I want to shoot up," the suspect allegedly said, asking for help. "Get some crappy car and ditch it somewhere. Police response time here is really slow." He said that he was waiting until he obtained a "proper gun" to commit that shooting.

The suspect then began speaking with an undercover FBI agent in January 2018. Azizi-Yarand allegedly told the agent and the FBI source that he had two other men who were "serious about this," but he was waiting until he turned 18 years old so that he could buy guns. Azizi-Yarand's birthday is in November.

In later conversations, the teenager tried to get the FBI source to purchase guns for the attack, with Azizi-Yarand funneling money to him through prepaid cards sent to a post office box.

Azizi-Yarand was said to be in contact with an ISIS member, who told him, "guns are simple, just open fire" when the suspect expressed concern about being untrained. "How hard can it be to spray down a big crowd of people? Las Vegas the dude was just blind firing. And got 100."

When looking into potential targets, Azizi-Yarand allegedly also considered a school. "School is a perfect place for an attack. Crowded and close quarters," he said. "Even a blind man could take 10 easily. Just fire where you hear screams."

However, the Stonebriar Centre appears to have been picked as the target in March. Azizi-Yarand allegedly told the FBI source that he had been observing the layout of the building, the number of security officers there, and the regular movements of the shopping mall's patrons. He allegedly also planned to set some stores on fire.

"I'd actually like to make a cop surrender and drop his gun," Azizi-Yarand allegedly said to the FBI source. "Then, douse him with gasoline and burn him. Record it."

Azizi-Yarand met the FBI source in person last month. They connected at the source's hotel and walked less than a mile to the Stonebriar Centre. There, they observed security officers and patrons together, and discussed the need for more weapons so that nobody would "try and take us on." They planned to kill the mall's police officers first.

In a conversation with the undercover FBI agent in April, Azizi-Yarand allegedly listed his goal for the mall attack.

Message gets across to the kuffar (Arabic for "disbelievers").

Inspires others.

We followed what Allah commanded us and filled them with fear.

We let others know that we were among those who will not accept weakness or humiliation.

Azizi-Yarand's alleged "manifesto" discussed the goals in further detail. "This is a message for America and any other country that is fighting Islam and slaughtering the Muslims with their fighter jets and other such weaponry," the document said. "You have brought this upon yourself America, you take the people's taxes and use it to finance your war against the Muslims. We will continue these attacks until you relent you airstrikes on us."

"Before you call us evil people, look yourselves," the document continued. "You have started this war with us. It will never end. We target your people as revenge for ours who were slaughtered."

If he is convicted, Azizi-Yarand could face up to life in prison for criminal solicitation and up to 10 years in prison for making a terroristic threat. His bond has been set at a total of \$3 million.

Chief John Bruce of the Frisco Police Department added, "The facts of this case, though alarming, serve as an example of the power of cooperation and the importance of each individual remaining vigilant in the spirit of see 'something, say something.' I would like to thank all the local and federal partners who worked on this case."

Cleveland Fourth Of July Terrorism Suspect To Undergo Competency Evaluation

[Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), July 27, 2018

CLEVELAND, Ohio – A federal magistrate judge ordered a competency evaluation for a man accused of plotting a terrorist attack on Fourth of July fireworks spectators in downtown Cleveland.

Magistrate Judge David Ruiz wrote Friday that he found good cause to question whether Demetrius Pitts can assist in his defense. He ordered a psychiatric or psychological examination and ordered the completion of a report on Pitts' competency as soon as possible.

Ruiz will schedule a hearing date once he receives the report.

The order came two days after Pitts' federal public defender Charles Fleming wrote that his client has long-standing mental health issues. Prosecutors did not object to the request for an evaluation.

The FBI arrested Pitts, 48, on July 1. Federal prosecutors say the Cincinnati native plotted an attack in the name of al-Qaida.

Pitts, who also goes by Abdur Raheem Rafeeq and Salah ad-Deem Osama Waleed, scoped out an area to park a van full of explosives near Voinovich Park, according to court filings.

An FBI informant gave Pitts a bus pass to travel downtown and a cellphone he used to text an undercover agent, authorities say.

Pitts has criminal convictions stretching back to 1989, including for robbery, domestic violence and theft. Save for a recent stay in a nursing and rehabilitation facility in Maple Heights, he has few apparent ties to Cleveland.

Last week, Pitts agreed to give prosecutors a two-month extension to formally charge him. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Baeppler said she and Fleming have had some preliminary discussions and would like to talk further. Ruiz said he granted the extension for investigation, negotiations and preparation.

The judge wrote Friday that the time between now and when he rules on whether Pitts is competent to stand trial will not count against that two-month extension.

Manila Court OKs US Request For Terror Suspect's Extradition

By Jim Gomez

[Associated Press](#), July 27, 2018

MANILA, Philippines (AP) – A Philippine court has granted a U.S. government request for the extradition of a Filipino doctor suspected by U.S. authorities of being an Islamic State group sympathizer and plotting bombings and shootings at New York City concert venues, subway stations and Times Square.

Presiding Judge Rosalyn Mislos-Loja granted the U.S. request in a July 23 ruling which The Associated Press obtained Friday and ordered Russell Langi Salic to be extradited to the U.S. to face the charges. Salic, who is detained in Manila, has denied the charges, opposed his extradition and can appeal.

In the 33-page decision, Mislos-Loja ordered the seizure and surrender to U.S. authorities of all items, documents and evidence connected with the offenses for which Salic is charged in the U.S., including cellphones, computers and documents.

Last year, U.S. prosecutors said Salic was one of three Islamic State group sympathizers who plotted bombings and shootings in 2016 in New York before U.S. agents thwarted the plot.

Salic was taken into custody in Manila last year. Canadian citizen Abdulrahman El Bahnasawy was arrested in the U.S. in 2016 and has pleaded guilty, and an American of Pakistani origin, Talha Haroon, was arrested in Pakistan in the same year.

Salic is alleged to have sent about \$423 from the Philippines in May 2016 to an undercover FBI agent posing as an Islamic extremist to help fund the planned attacks. Salic told the agent he intended to continue sending money in support of the Islamic State group, according to court documents that have been made public in New York.

The documents said Salic, who used the alias Abu Khalid, allegedly told the agent his ultimate goal was to join

the Islamic State group in Syria but that “it would be a great pleasure if we can slaughter” people in New York.

Transaction records obtained by the FBI show that in addition to the \$423, Salic allegedly made multiple money transfers in 2015 and 2016 in support of the Islamic State group ranging from \$180 to \$435 to Australia, Lebanon, Malaysia and Palestine. He also sent money twice to Bosnia in April 2016, according to U.S. court documents.

The funds were sent through an international money transfer agency in southern Cagayan de Oro city, the records show. Salic had worked as a doctor in a hospital in Cagayan de Oro.

Salic told reporters after a Manila court hearing last November that U.S. authorities may have mistaken money he sent to a charity as funding for the plots. An FBI agent who posed as a Muslim online was behind the allegations against him, he said.

The U.S. government sent an extradition request in May last year. The Philippine government, through the Department of Justice, filed the request with a Manila court on behalf of the U.S. in September as specified under an extradition treaty.

Aside from the U.S. charges, Salic also faces separate criminal complaints for alleged involvement in the abduction of six sawmill workers, two of whom were later beheaded, in the southern Philippine town of Butig in Lanao del Sur province in 2016, an allegation that he has denied.

Salic, who is detained at the National Bureau of Investigation in Manila, could face either the U.S. or Philippine case first depending on the decision of Filipino authorities, justice department officials said.

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NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS

Virginia To Begin Issuing Driver's Licenses That Will Be Required For Air Travel In 2020

By Luz Lazo

[Washington Post](#), July 27, 2018

Virginia will begin issuing a new driver's license this fall, putting the commonwealth in compliance with a federal law passed after the Sept. 11 attacks designed to tighten security requirements for state-issued identification.

In the next two years, Virginia will replace as many as 2.7 million driver's licenses — a massive undertaking likely to result in longer lines and wait times at Department of Motor Vehicles offices.

Virginia is one of several states scrambling to comply with the 2005 domestic security program known as Real ID,

which is intended to prevent identity fraud. The program calls for issuing more-secure licenses and identification cards.

While Virginia lawmakers were among the first state officials to back Real ID, officials have struggled over how to implement and pay for the federal requirements that affect the state's 6 million licensed drivers.

Nearly \$21 million is being spent to comply with the law and meet an Oct. 1 deadline, including upgrading technology and purchasing new scanning equipment. The state will also increase staffing at the 75 DMV offices in the next two years.

Residents of the state are not required to get Real ID, but starting on Oct. 1, 2020, those who travel by air and visit federal facilities such as military bases will need it or another form of identification such as a U.S. passport or a military ID.

“Some folks will just find that they may not need to get a Real ID and for everyone else we are here and happy to serve,” Virginia DMV spokeswoman Brandy Brubaker said.

Thirty-one states, including Maryland, and the District are in compliance with the federal mandate so far.

American Samoa is the only U.S. territory listed as noncompliant and without an extension from the Department of Homeland Security. Travelers from there have to present an alternative form of acceptable identification.

Transportation Security Administration agents began enforcing the provision at security checkpoints this year, only accepting licenses from compliant states or those that have been granted extensions. Enforcement at federal buildings and military bases began in 2014.

Under the federal law, states require applicants to have to provide proof of identity and legal U.S. residency to obtain the new ID.

The requirements are intended to prevent identity fraud by establishing minimum standards for driver's licenses and identification cards — a recommendation of the 9/11 Commission. Eighteen of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers obtained state IDs, some fraudulently. Nearly half of the terrorists obtained their driver's licenses in Virginia.

The law was to take effect in 2008, but the program was delayed repeatedly as states called it an unfunded mandate and privacy advocates warned it would create a de facto national ID. But the pleas to the DHS and Congress for modifications to the law and its implementation were unsuccessful.

The compliance process has not been easy nor smooth. Critics of the controversial law say the biggest problem of Real ID is the inconvenience it poses on Americans who have to go through the process of getting a driver's license again.

Some requirements have made visits to DMVs around the country much more difficult, they said. People have struggled with obtaining the documents needed, such as birth certificates, Social Security cards and multiple proofs of residency.

In Virginia, for example, current license holders will be required to present two proofs of residency, instead of one, and a Social Security card, instead of just providing the number.

States in the final stage of complying with the federal mandate have experienced long backups at DMVs with customers trying to get a Real ID.

Kansas began issuing the Real ID last fall and reports of long lines for the license have continued through this summer. In California, the average wait time exploded at Department of Motor Vehicle offices beginning in January when the state started issuing the enhanced ID cards. Some residents reported spending upward of seven hours to get the new ID. In Indiana, divorced women have complained about the documentation needed to get the Real ID. Anyone who has changed their name needs to provide documentation of that change.

Pennsylvania will start issuing Real ID licenses next spring; Maine next summer; and Oregon won't start issuing Real ID cards until mid-2020.

"No matter the state, jurisdiction or locality, nothing frustrates motorists or residents more than having to wait in line down at the DMV," said Victoria Stark, AAA Mid-Atlantic retail manager, in Northern Virginia.

Virginia transportation officials are already urging license holders to gather up the documentation they will need to obtain the new ID so they can avoid multiple DMV visits. Unless their license is due for renewal, officials are urging customers to wait a few months to get the Real ID.

"You don't have to come in to get one right away unless you want to. You have until October of 2020, until those federal regulations take effect," Brubaker said. "Think about coming in mid-2019 when we think that demand may start to decrease."

OTHER DHS NEWS

Portland Mayor Supports Aim Of ICE Protesters, But Not Makeshift Camps

[Oregonian](#), July 27, 2018

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said Friday that, while he supports protesters' rights to express their views in public venues in the city, they should not erect large, semi-permanent camps as part of their demonstrations.

Wheeler on Friday held the first of what he has billed as experimental monthly on-the-record conversations with Portland's press corps. The press conference ranged in topic from neighborhood planning to environmental policy.

But reporters homed in on the five-week protest at the city's Immigrations and Customs Enforcement field office, which Wheeler ordered disbanded Monday. Protesters demonstrating against the Trump administration and asking

for the abolishment of ICE had set up a large camp near Southwest Macadam Avenue and did not leave for weeks, disrupting agency workers and area businesses. They left behind a junk heap of astonishing size, which drew criticism even from supporters of their cause.

Wheeler on Friday reaffirmed that he views the Trump administration's former policy of separating children and parents after illegal border crossings as abhorrent and mean-spirited. He said he does not have enough information to draw a conclusion on whether ICE should be abolished.

But he said he does not support building large camps, as the ICE protesters did, because they pose problems for demonstrators' health and safety and block area visitors.

The mayor went further, saying he believes it "deters from the main message" when protesters leave "piles of garbage" in their stead as they decamp. The city and Trimet will pay for the cleanup of trash and makeshift buildings left by protesters; the total cost is not yet finalized.

With future demonstrations, Wheeler said he would prefer to force camps to disband "sooner rather than later."

– Gordon R. Friedman

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Pamplin Media Group – Did ICE Protest Matter? 'Absolutely' Says Mayor Wheeler

By Zane Sparling

[Portland \(OR\) Tribune](#), July 27, 2018

So clean you could eat off the ground.

That was Mayor Ted Wheeler's description of the former site of the Occupy ICE camp — now scraped clean of detritus after a five-week protest outside the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Southwest Portland ended peacefully.

Local authorities posted eviction notices about 24 hours before the sweep began at 4:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 25. By that time just a dozen demonstrators remained on the site where several hundred once slept. Police said no arrests were made.

Representatives of the news media peppered the mayor with questions about the vanquished encampment during a Friday, July 27 news conference at City Hall. Several journalists asked why Wheeler ordered the \$12,000 clean-up while still allowing right-wing protesters to hold rowdy marches along downtown streets.

Wheeler acknowledged that the gatherings have become "organized street brawls," but said the city's role is to allow everyone the ability to express their first amendment rights safely.

"The Portland Police Bureau does not get to pick ideological sides," he responded. "I've told you my particular

objection to the Trump Administration policy, and it is a strenuous objection.”

Wheeler also said he has no plans to pull Portland’s participation from the Joint Terrorism Task Force, alluding to the threat of white-power domestic terrorism in the Rose City and noting that “the work of the JTTF happens whether we’re apart of it or not.”

He said he expects the City Council to revisit the issue in 2019.

Wheeler dodged a question about whether he supports calls to abolish ICE, saying he wants immigration reform but doesn’t know enough about the agency’s other responsibilities. When asked if he believed protesters had “accomplished” anything, his reply was unequivocal.

“The answer in my mind is absolutely,” Wheeler said. “There’s no question the president changed his mind when he saw people around the nation were very, very upset.”

Overall, Wheeler appeared pleased by the drama-free disassembly of the tents, portable toilets, couches, canopies, wooden barricades and miscellaneous flotsam that comprised the Occupy ICE outpost.

Flanked by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, he announced the decision to clear the camp on July 23, calling it “unsustainable” due to safety and sanitation issues. Prior to his decision, a faction dubbed #AbolishICE said it would leave the camp because occupation was “a tactic and not a strategy.”

“With humility, we acknowledge that this fight has been fought long before us, and we have much to learn,” the group said in an email. “This move will decentralize the movement and allow it to exist indefinitely.”

Wheeler kept the Portland Police Bureau away from the camp for most of its short shelf life — a decision that prompted the Federal Protective Service to patrol the property and block all traffic on Southwest Bancroft Street, which was technically outside their jurisdiction.

Wheeler said that caused cancer patients to voice their concerns about driving to Oregon Health & Science University’s riverfront hospital campus. Yet it was the closure of the ICE-adjacent Happy Camper coffee cart that grabbed more headlines, especially after the nonprofit’s owners said protesters’ harassment of customers forced them to go out of business.

Occupation leadership later circulated screenshots showing that the coffee cart had been listed as for sale on social media since June 14, three days before the protest began.

The news conference at City Hall may become a tradition of sorts, as city staffers have promised access-hungry journalists monthly opportunities to lob questions on all topics at the mayor. Additionally, a third-floor space will now serve as a pressroom for credentialed media.

The change comes as the mayor’s former spokesman, Michael Cox, is elevated to chief of staff. Sophia June has been named the communications coordinator.

“This is a bit of an experiment,” Wheeler said at the start of the well-attended meeting, sipping from a coffee cup emblazoned “The Rooster Personality.”

“My expectation and hope is that over time this actually becomes more of an in-depth and meaningful policy conversation.”

A 6-Year-Old Girl Was Sexually Abused In An Immigrant-Detention Center

[Nation](#), July 27, 2018

According to immigrant-rights advocates, a 6-year-old girl separated from her mother under the Trump administration’s “zero-tolerance” immigration policy was sexually abused while at an Arizona detention facility run by Southwest Key Programs. The child was then made to sign a form acknowledging that she was told to maintain her distance from her alleged abuser, who is an older child being held at the same detention facility. Ad Policy

The girl, who is only identified by the initials D.L., and her mother had been fleeing gang violence in their native Guatemala. According to the family, the pair entered the United States at a point of entry in El Paso, Texas, on May 24, where they presented Border Patrol authorities with paperwork claiming that they had “credible fear” that returning to Guatemala would result in harm. On May 26, government officials separated D.L. from her mother and sent her to Casa Glendale, a shelter outside of Phoenix operated by Southwest Key Programs. It was there that the alleged abuse occurred.

Before D.L. was taken away, her mother provided authorities with the phone number of D.L.’s father, an undocumented immigrant living in California. On June 11, D.L.’s father received a phone call from Southwest Key explaining that a boy had fondled his daughter and other girls. According to family spokesperson Mark Lane, D.L.’s father was told not to worry, because Southwest Key was changing some of its protocols and such abuse would not happen again. (Lane was connected with D.L.’s family through Families Belong Together, a coalition of civil-rights groups formed in response to the recent border crackdown.) Lane says that D.L.’s father asked to speak with a social worker, but, despite promises from the facility, he never heard from one.

A Southwest Key Programs document obtained by The Nation confirms that D.L. was reported to have been sexually abused on June 4, 2018. On June 12, one day after D.L.’s father was contacted, the 6-year-old girl was presented with the form stating that, as part of the facility’s intervention protocol, she had been instructed to “maintain my distance

from the other youth involved” and had been provided “psychoeducation,” described in the document as “reporting abuse” and “good touch bad touch.” The form, posted below, shows D.L.’s “signature”—a single letter “D,” next to the characterization of her as “tender age”—which supposedly confirms that D.L. understands “that it is my responsibility to follow the safety plan” reviewed with her.

When D.L.’s mother learned about the incident, she was still being detained in Texas and felt devastated. “I felt really horrible. I couldn’t do anything for her, because we were separated,” she said through a translator in an interview with The Nation. “It was a nightmare. When my husband told me what happened, I felt helpless. She was so little, she was probably so scared, probably afraid to say anything to anyone. It was a total nightmare for me.”

But the nightmare wasn’t over. On June 22, Southwest Key again contacted D.L.’s father and informed him that the same boy initially cited for abuse had hit and fondled D.L. again. According to Lane, D.L.’s father asked how the facility could allow this to happen, and the woman on the phone responded that she was only calling him to advise him that it had happened, that she didn’t have permission to say anything else, and he would have to speak with the director.

Southwest Key, a nonprofit based in Austin, Texas, is contracted by the federal government to house immigrant minors in 26 facilities across the United States, according to a report in Texas Monthly. The company’s shelters have come under increased scrutiny since the Trump administration began forcibly separating children from immigrant parents seeking asylum. In Texas, where the nonprofit operates a number of children’s shelters, facilities have been cited for hundreds of violations over the past three years. Southwest Key is expected to be paid \$458 million by the federal government this year.

When The Nation contacted Southwest Key, a woman who answered the phone said she was not allowed to talk to the media. Additional requests for comment have not been answered. The Department of Health and Human Services, which contracts with Southwest Key, also did not have a comment at press time.

Earlier this year, the ACLU released a report, based on 30,000 pages of documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, that described hundreds of cases of abuse of immigrant children in US custody between 2009 and 2014. Customs and Border Protection issued a statement calling the report “unfounded and baseless.”

Through the work of Families Belong Together and a legal team assembled for this case, D.L., her mother, and her father have now all been reunited.

According to D.L.’s mother, when the family came together again, the young girl was confused. “I hugged her, I was crying. She didn’t recognize me,” the mother said. “She told me that she thought I was never going to be with her

again and that she was going to have to live with another lady. She behaved like she was still in detention. She wouldn’t touch me, hug me, or kiss me.”

“It lasted for a couple of days,” said D.L.’s mother. “She didn’t know I was her mom. She thought I was another social worker.”

D.L.’s mother reports that her girl is getting better everyday, but the trauma of the ordeal lingers. “She is still behaving following the rules of the detention center,” said the mother. “She doesn’t let them touch her, she doesn’t touch them. She wakes up at 6, and bathes and eats. She behaves like she is programmed.”

“She says, ‘Please don’t return me to Guatemala, I don’t want to go back to that place where I have to sleep alone with the other kids,’” added the mother.

D.L.’s father was anxious as well, since he hadn’t seen his daughter in a long time. “She recognized me quicker because of all of the photos that she had seen and because I spoke with her many times while she was in the shelter,” recounted the father.

“My morale was so low,” the father says of the time they were all separated. But now, “When I had my wife and daughter with me, I felt so good. I knew that now that I had them at my side, they would be protected, I would be able to protect them again. I don’t know what to hope for. I don’t know what will happen. But I think that whatever happens will be good, because we are all three together again.”

‘It Happened, And It Happened Twice’: 6-year-old Girl Reportedly Abused At Migrant Shelter

By Dianna M. Nájuez And Mary Jo Pitzl

[Arizona Republic](#), July 28, 2018

PHOENIX – A 6-year-old girl who was separated from her mother under the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” border policy was reportedly sexually abused by another child at a facility for migrant children run by Southwest Key, according to a form provided by the child’s family.

As first reported by The Nation, the child was assaulted twice during her stay at Casa Glendale in the Phoenix area.

The child, without any parental permission, also was forced to sign a document saying she would stay away from anyone associated with the abuse, according to a migrant advocate.

Jeff Eller, a spokesman for Southwest Key, told The Arizona Republic Friday that officials in charge of caring for the child and handling the case made a mistake labeling the incident as “sexual abuse,” when it should have been characterized as “inappropriate behavior.”

Southwest Key, a Texas-based nonprofit, houses more than 1,500 migrant children in Arizona, California and Texas under a \$458 million contract with the federal

Unaccompanied Alien Children Program. Eight of those facilities are in Arizona.

Employees at two Arizona Southwest Key facilities have been accused of inappropriate contact with minors on at least two occasions since 2015, including an incident that led to a conviction for sexual abuse, police records show.

Southwest Key facilities, which already were set up to house children who crossed the border illegally without a parent, were a quick fix for dealing with the flow of children forcibly separated from their parents under the “zero tolerance” policy.

Mark Lane, a family spokesman who runs Poppa’s House, an organization that supports migrants, said Southwest Key is covering its tracks about the abuse.

“It happened, and it happened twice,” Lane said of the abuse. “That’s a nice way to backtrack. They got to put lipstick on it, that’s what spokespeople and publicists do.”

Lane said the child was forced to sign a form that told her she had to stay away from her attacker.

“For a 6-year-old to be taken into a counseling session like that and to be held responsible and to be told to sign a document like that,” he said. “People can’t believe they had a 6-year-old girl sign that she was responsible for making sure she didn’t get molested again.”

The form says, “I confirm that the safety plan was reviewed with me and I understand that it is my responsibility to follow the safety plan.”

The form is signed by an odd-shaped “D” in what appears to be a child’s handwriting. After the signature, in parentheses, written in an adult’s handwriting, it says: “tender age.”

The form provided to The Republic is stamped with a Southwest Key Programs emblem. It is titled: “PREA Safety Plan.” Under the type of incident, written in black ink, are two words: “Sexual Abuse.”

PREA stands for “Prison Rape Elimination Act,” a reference to a federal law.

Under a “synopsis of the incident,” the allegations are repeated with more detail.

“The Department of Y.C.W. reported that the client has presented sexually inappropriate behavior since about a week.”

Two forms of multiple possible interventions are marked with a large X.

Maintain my distance from the other youth involved.

Psychoeducation topics provided: Reporting abuse. Good touch. Bad touch.

Lane said the girl was assaulted once on June 4, which is the date listed on the form.

After the alleged assault, Lane said, the girl’s father, who is not releasing his name to protect his daughter and wife, was called by Southwest Key Director Silvia Zavala.

Zavala, he said, told the father details of what had happened to his daughter.

“They also said there were other girls involved and they were going to change protocols. It won’t happen again,” Lane said.

Then, the father got another call from a Southwest Key employee.

“They called 10 days later to say it happened again, with the same boy,” Lane said. “He’d already been told that his daughter had been fondled once, now it happened again, that’s when he went into high gear.”

In a Southwest Key statement addressing the allegations, officials said there was an addendum to the original report. The addendum states the 6-year-old girl said the boy didn’t touch her and this was not sexual abuse.

The original report and the addendum were sent to federal agencies and to the state, according to the statement.

Eller did not immediately return a follow-up call for clarification on whether he was referring to both allegations of abuse being mistakenly labeled or to confirm whether there was a second abuse incident.

The father was sent a packet to fill out and was told that officials were going to release his daughter to him.

The mother, who is from Guatemala, was separated from her child in late May in Texas, Lane said. She told officials about her husband, the child’s father, and provided his phone number.

The mother remained in a Texas immigration detention facility, while her child was transferred to the Southwest Key facility in Arizona.

Lane said that shortly after the second alleged assault and receiving forms to obtain custody of his daughter, the father was informed that they would no longer release his daughter to him.

That, Lane says, is when the desperate father reached out to Families Belong Together, a grassroots organization that has been fundraising to help parents reunite with their children. After a series of calls to migrant-rights advocates, the father was put in touch with Lane and California-based attorney Francisco Aldana.

They received word about a week ago, that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials planned to reunite the child with her mother in Texas. The child was transferred to an ICE facility, Lane said, and held with her mother overnight.

They were released together on July 18. The mother has a pending asylum case. She and her daughter have been reunited with the girl’s father.

“Mom is pretty strong,” Lane said. “Dad is very optimistic. He said he’s happy to have his wife and kid back where he feels like he can take care of them.”

Their little girl is not adjusting as well, Lane said.

She's "standoffish," like she's programmed and afraid that she's still under the rules of the facility, he said.

"She's afraid about going back to that place that they 'make me sleep alone with the other kids,'" Lane said.

The parents plan to get counseling for the daughter and for themselves.

Lane said the attorney is handling the immigration case and looking into a civil suit. He said he does not know if Southwest Key officials reported the abuse to police and the parents have not done so yet either.

Eller released a statement late Friday that said staff at the shelter talked to the children involved, assigned one-on-one supervision of the alleged offender and learned that the alleged victim said she was never touched. In addition, video footage from the facility did not provide any evidence of a child being sexually abused, he said.

Eller told The Republic the shelter erred in labeling its initial report as "sexual abuse," when it should have been characterized as "inappropriate behavior."

"We screwed up," Eller said. "We mislabeled it as sexual abuse. That's on us."

Eller said another child at the shelter told staff that a 5-year-old boy had touched a 6-year-old girl, triggering the initial June 4 report. The report is made on a form required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act. In its statement, Southwest Key said that form is required to be filled out for a broad range of incidents.

The 5-year-old had been sexually acting out, Eller said. When asked if that behavior involved another child, he said he did not know.

Southwest Key said, in addition to state officials, it notified the federal offices involved in shelter oversight — namely the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and HHS' inspector general.

Lane said none of this would have happened had the child remained with her mother or been released to her father.

"I think that it's important to know that once you separate a child from their parents, all bets are off and anything can happen when we don't know who's taking care of them," Lane said.

Republic reporter Agnel Philip contributed to this article.

6 Year Old Sexually Abused In Immigrant Detention Center After Being Separated From Mother

By David Brennan

[Newsweek](#), July 28, 2018

A 6-year-old girl has been sexually abused in an immigration detention center after having been separated from her mother, according to an immigrant-rights group.

Documents obtained by The Nation show the girl was abused at the Casa Glendale facility near Phoenix, Arizona, by an older child being held there. She was then made to sign a form that said she would keep her distance from her abuser.

Identified only as D.L., the girl crossed the border with her mother in El Paso, Texas, to escape gang violence in Guatemala. Two days later, the pair were separated under President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" policy. The girl was then sent to Casa Glendale, operated by Southwest Key Program, which operates 26 immigrant shelter facilities for immigrant children across the country.

The documents said the girl had "presented sexually inappropriate behavior," prompting staff to investigate. On June 11, the girl's father—an undocumented immigrant living in California—received a call from Southwest Key staff telling him his daughter had been abused by one of the boys at the facility, as had several other girls. The first abuse took place on June 4.

According to family spokesperson Mark Lane, he was told that the center's protocols were being changed to make sure the abuse was not repeated. Though the father asked to speak to a social worker about the abuse, he was never contacted by one.

The next day, D.L. was told to sign a form noting she had been told to "maintain my distance from the other youth involved." D.L., who is listed as being of "tender age," acknowledged "that it is my responsibility to follow the safety plan" put in place.

However, the abuse continued. D.L.'s father received another call on June 22, telling him his daughter has been touched inappropriately by the same boy and that she had hit her abuser.

D.L.'s mother was being detained in Texas while the abuse was happening. She told The Nation she "felt really horrible" at being unable to help her daughter. "It was a nightmare. When my husband told me what happened, I felt helpless. She was so little, she was probably so scared, probably afraid to say anything to anyone. It was a total nightmare for me."

The family were later reunited by the Families Belong Together group, a coalition of civil rights organizations. It is not clear whether they plan to take legal action against the center where the abuse occurred. The facility has thus far failed to respond to any requests for comments, as has the Department of Health and Human Services.

D.L.'s mother said her daughter is beginning to recover, but the psychological scars of her time in detention are clear to see. She said it took several days for D.L. to recognize her as her mother, and "behaved like she was still in detention." She explained her daughter "told me that she thought I was never going to be with her again and that she was going to

have to live with another lady...She wouldn't touch me, hug me, or kiss me."

The Trump administration claims to have met its court-ordered deadline to reunite more than immigrant children with their parents, The Hill reported. Officials have identified 1,634 parents as being eligible for reunification out of a possible 2,551 children aged 5 and older still in custody. A further 711 children remain in the care of the government because their parents are either not eligible for reunification or could not be found.

An Obscure Federal Law May Give Corporations Immunity From Lawsuits Over Terrorism

By Matt Pearce

[Los Angeles Times](#), July 27, 2018

For MGM Resorts International, millions of dollars could hinge on a single question: Was the shooting massacre of 58 people at a concert in Las Vegas last year an act of terrorism?

The killer, longtime gambler Steven Paddock, left few clues about his motive.

But how the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or the federal courts answer the question could determine whether shooting survivors and families of the dead can sue the casino and hotel giant, which they say missed warning signs of his attack.

In a novel legal move, MGM is arguing that the attack was terrorism, and that under a law passed by Congress in 2002, the company is immune from such lawsuits.

If MGM is successful, it could open the door for more companies and public agencies to seek protection from lawsuits not just over clear-cut terrorist attacks with political agendas, but over mass shootings with no known motive.

The Support Anti-terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act — known as the SAFETY Act — is unfamiliar to most Americans.

It was an obscure bit of tort reform that passed after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, tucked into the same package of federal anti-terrorism legislation that created the Department of Homeland Security.

If the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in 2001 made Americans fear for their lives, corporations saw an additional threat from terrorism: legal liability.

Getting sued for safety lapses after a terrorist attack could be ruinous for any company.

But policymakers saw an additional problem. If companies are on the hook for negligence lawsuits after acts of terrorism, it might prompt those companies to decide it's not worth it to provide security — say, X-ray machines or surveillance cameras — for places that might be targets of terrorism, like airports.

That's where the SAFETY Act came in. The law allowed companies to apply to the Department of Homeland Security to seek verification that their security products and services were useful.

In exchange, Homeland Security would provide certification under the law, which would serve as a powerful immunity claim in court in case of a terrorist attack.

The law requires that liability claims be handled in federal court. Lower-level protections, called SAFETY Act "designations," limit liability after an attack.

Higher-level protections, called "certifications," generally allow companies and their clients to claim immunity as long as they did not misrepresent their services to the government during the SAFETY Act application process.

Over the last 16 years, more and more companies, along with airports, sports teams and stadiums, have submitted to the Department of Homeland Security review process and have received certifications.

The government's SAFETY Act website shows some recent recipients:

Last October, the St. Louis Cardinals' bid for SAFETY Act protections got a public boost from Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Democrat from Missouri, who noted how intensive the process can be.

"My committee staff has received briefings by the director of the SAFETY Act office and other DHS officials, the director of security for the Cardinals, and outside counsel advising the team on their applications," McCaskill wrote in a letter urging the then-acting Homeland Security secretary, Elaine Duke, to give the Cardinals her "full consideration."

The baseball team received its designation in December.

MGM itself does not hold a SAFETY Act certification. But the company it hired to provide security for the concert, the Route 91 Harvest Festival, does.

Contemporary Services Corp. received the government's highest-level protections in April 2017 for "physical security, access control, and crowd management," according to the SAFETY Act's website. The company declined to comment on ongoing litigation.

MGM drew wrathful condemnations from the public after it asserted that the designation makes it immune from shooting survivors' lawsuits.

It didn't help in the court of public opinion that MGM asserted its immunity by preemptively suing shooting survivors, whose lawyers protested the maneuver as heartless.

But the company's legal argument is not a totally off-the-wall interpretation of an obscure and untested federal statute. One of the attorneys retained by MGM, Raymond Biagini, who often defends government and commercial contractors, helped write the SAFETY Act.

The law describes terrorism as acts “intended to cause mass destruction, injury or other loss to citizens or institutions of the United States.”

That differs from traditional definitions of terrorism, which require an ideological agenda — opening the door for a possible interpretation that the law would cover mass shootings with no known motive.

The statute puts the determination of whether an attack was terrorism at the feet of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, who has yet to make a decision.

“The matter is currently under review within the Department of Homeland Security,” the agency said in a statement.

GLOBAL MEDIA

The Loudest Opponent Of Italy’s New Anti-Migrant Policy? The Catholic Church

By Chico Harlan And Stefano Pitrelli

[Washington Post](#), July 27, 2018

In a small church in central Italy, a priest told his congregation one recent Sunday morning that the motto of Italy’s highest-profile politician — “Italians First” — was antithetical to Christianity itself. Farther north, another parish priest said that supporters of the country’s new governing hard-line anti-migrant party “cannot call themselves Christian.” On the island of Sicily, an archbishop speaking in a public square took an even broader swipe, criticizing politicians who drive “their own miserable success” by exploiting fear about migrants.

“The church can’t stay silent,” the archbishop of Palermo, Corrado Lorefice, said during that speech, which marked a local holiday. “I can’t stay silent.”

As Italy’s migration politics swing to the right, the Catholic Church is responding with an oppositional roar.

Pope Francis, during the five years of his papacy, has spoken about the humanity and rights of migrants, cautioning about the anti-immigrant sentiment taking hold in parts of the developed world. But those warnings only recently turned into a clarion in the very backyard of the Roman Catholic Church, where one of the world’s most Catholic nations has ushered in a populist government that pledges to “stop the invasion” and tighten its doors.

In recent weeks, church leaders of all kinds — figures close to Francis and priests speaking on quiet Sundays — have struck back against what they describe as a xenophobic and fear-driven response to the wave of refugees and economic migrants who have reached Italian shores. Their voices have stood in relief against a political landscape where few others, even in Italian opposition parties, are delivering that message.

“It’s really unprecedented that the official voices of the Catholic Church are so squarely opposed” to an Italian government, said Massimo Faggioli, a Villanova University professor who studies Catholicism and European politics. “That hasn’t happened before. The Catholic Church is the opposition, basically.”

But some of those outspoken church leaders also describe a jolt of alarm, and say that the rise of anti-migrant movements here and in several other predominantly Catholic countries, including Poland and Austria, shows sharp divisions within the faith over how welcoming to be. The dominant figure in Italy’s new government is Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, who swears by the Gospel, sometimes brandishes rosary beads, and describes undocumented immigrants as a “tide of delinquents” whom he wants to send home.

“With all possible respect for the pastor of souls, instead of helping Africa’s poor come to Europe, my duty in the government is to first think of the millions of Italian poor,” Salvini recently wrote on Facebook, in a post responding to the archbishop’s speech in Palermo. “Am I wrong?”

Francis has not spoken explicitly about the shift in Italian politics, but this month he held a special Mass for migrants, and two weeks later, in front of 25,000 people in St. Peter’s Square, asked nations to act “decisively and immediately” to prevent the “tragedy” of migrant deaths at sea. Francis and new Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte have not had a formal meeting, but Salvini has already met a high-profile church figure, Cardinal Raymond Burke, who is perhaps the highest-profile Vatican critic of the pope, and who has vowed to resist liberal changes.

In country after country, new nationalistic immigration policies have tested Catholic officials — and they have responded in different ways. Catholic leaders in the United States have been critical of President Trump on migration, and America’s organizing body of bishops last month described as “immoral” the practice of separating children from their parents at the border. In Poland, which has refused to accept a European-mandated quota of refugees, Catholic leaders have been more restrained, offering occasional criticism of the government’s refugee refusal, but also supporting a massive gathering last year of Catholics along the country’s border — an event that was seen by some as having anti-Islam overtones.

In Italy, where more than 650,000 people have arrived by sea since 2014, resentment toward migrants has steadily built, particularly as other European countries resisted plans to more equitably share the burden of hosting migrants and processing their asylum claims. Salvini announced last month that he was closing Italian ports to humanitarian vessels, a move that has added to the chaos in the Mediterranean. He has since frequently said he is turning campaign promises

into “action.” Polls suggest his party, the League, has become Italy’s most popular.

Some Catholic leaders take it as a sign that their messages haven’t come through.

“If there are Christians that feel an ease in saying no to reception, the church must ask itself a question,” Bishop Nunzio Galantino, the secretary general of the Italian Bishops’ Conference and a prelate who is close to Francis, said in an interview. “This means we have spoken about Jesus — performed ceremonies and done liturgies — but we surely haven’t created a mentality according to the gospel.”

A priest in the town of Teramo, 100 miles northeast of Rome, decided one Sunday morning this month that it was time to address some of those issues. What bothered him most was Salvini’s motto, Italians First, which the priest felt contradicted Catholic teachings about charity and equality.

“My intention is not to lead people to vote,” the priest, Federico Pompei, said in an interview, “but to reflect on the word of God. The gospel’s motto would be: Mankind first.”

A phrase like Italians First, Pompei said, should “not come from the mouth of Christians.”

When he mentioned Salvini during his homily, most congregants continued to listen. But three people stood up and left.

“My explanation is that plenty of Salvini’s voters are practicing Christians,” he said.

Some Catholic groups have tried to play a more active role in softening attitudes toward migrants or calling attention to government policies. One missionary priest, Alex Zanotelli, has organized a hunger strike that included sit-ins near Italy’s Parliament, where he said that Francis’s message is “having a hard time reaching the church’s grass roots.” In June, Caritas, a major Catholic charitable group, organized shared meals in dozens of countries, including Italy, where people could meet with migrants and refugees. Pope Francis said he hoped such encounters could help nurture feelings of “fraternity.”

One of the most notable statements about migration came from the powerful Italian Bishops’ Conference, which last week released a five-paragraph statement, illustrated on its website with the photo of a weak migrant who had been clinging to flotsam in the Mediterranean before her rescue. The statement didn’t specifically mention the Italian government, but it spoke of the need to “save our own humanity from vulgarity and barbarization” by saving lives, “beginning with the most exposed, humiliated and trampled upon.”

Then, this past Wednesday, a mainstream Catholic weekly magazine, *Famiglia Cristiana*, added its own match to the fire, released the cover illustration of its upcoming issue — featuring a photo of Salvini and a Latin phrase associated with repelling the evil of Satan. The magazine’s headline said its opposition was “nothing personal,” but based on the

gospel. Still, Salvini felt compelled to respond, and he released a statement saying that he didn’t think the comparison was fair.

“I am the least of the good Christians,” he said. “But I don’t think I deserve as much. I am reassured by the fact I receive on a daily basis the support of so many women and men of the church.”

A Record 539,000 Immigrants Moved To Australia With The Net Pace Of 262,000 The Highest In 13 Years

By Stephen Johnson

[Daily Mail \(UK\)](#), July 27, 2018

More than half-a-million immigrants moved to Australia in the last year – setting a new record.

New figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed 539,000 immigrants moved to Australia in the 2016-17 financial year, an all-time high.

The net annual immigration pace was 262,489, factoring in people moving overseas.

Three-quarters of immigrants are moving to Sydney and Melbourne.

The revelation came a week before the Australian population was set to surpass the 25 million milestone, 22 years earlier than predicted in the federal government’s first inter-generational report of 2002.

The net immigration figure of 262,489 was slightly below a record set in 2009 and came before Immigration Minister Peter Dutton this year announced a small 20,000 cut to the migration rate.

Of the net arrivals, 39.8 per cent moved to New South Wales while another 34.3 per cent of them moved to Victoria.

With very few migrants moving to regional areas, that meant 74 per cent of them moved to Sydney and Melbourne, which were already congested.

The ABS’s director of migration statistics Myles Burleigh said the total number of immigrants of 539,000 was a record high, before people moving out of Australia was factored in.

‘Factoring in departures, in net terms overseas migration was 262,000, which is below the record high of 300,000 in 2008-09,’ Mr Burleigh said.

Of the 539,000 people who migrated to Australia in 2016-17, 315,000 of them arrived on a temporary visa, including 150,000 international students, 50,000 working holiday makers, and 32,000 workers on temporary skilled visas.

During 2016-17, 276,000 people moved overseas.

That left 262,489 who immigrated to Australia, with 104,478 of them moving to New South Wales followed by another 90,009 going to Victoria.

The numbers going to the two biggest states was significantly higher than the 35,199, or 13.4 per cent, going to

Queensland and 13,384, or 5.1 per cent, moving to Western Australia.

Former immigration minister Philip Ruddock said the immigration numbers varied depending on economic circumstances but he admitted many new arrivals were moving to Sydney and Melbourne.

'Sometimes there are issues in relation to where people want to settle,' he told Daily Mail Australia.

'If you look at where the support mechanisms often are, particularly through people who have already settled in Australia, others tend to follow, that does happen.'

'Having communities that have already settled successfully joined by others is not necessarily a bad thing.'

Australia accepts immigrants via the family, skilled and humanitarian categories.

The mix was changed in 1996 so skilled migrants were favoured over family reunion.

Immigration numbers soared above 100,000 in 2002 when John Howard was Liberal prime minister and surpassed the 200,000 mark in 2012 under Labor's Julia Gillard.

Interstate migration was also significant in 2016-17, with the 377,000 people moving to another state or territory, the highest in 13 years.

CommSec chief economist Craig James said Victoria, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania were the favoured destinations for people relocating for work, family or retirement.

'While the NSW population is being supported by overseas migration, these flows are being offset by those moving to other states and territories,' he said.

Act Of Defiance Casts Harsh Light On Europe's Deportations Of Asylum Seekers

By Christina Anderson And Megan Specia
[New York Times](#), July 27, 2018

When she boarded the plane, Elin Ersson had no intention of flying. Her goal was to ensure another passenger disembarked to avoid what she feared would be his certain death.

The man was an Afghan asylum seeker seated in the rear of the Turkish Airlines flight as it awaited departure from Gothenburg, Sweden, accompanied by officials assigned to transport him back to Kabul, Afghanistan.

In a 14-minute act of defiance on Monday, livestreamed via her mobile phone, Ms. Ersson refused to sit, delaying the departure. She withstood yelling by impatient passengers and crew members. She calmly responded: "I am doing what I can to save a person's life."

The authorities finally relented and took the asylum seeker off the plane — a moment of vindication for Ms. Ersson, a Swedish college student and migrant-rights activist with rosy cheeks, oversize glasses and an earnest resolve.

Her video struck a nerve with millions as it reverberated across social media — and cast a harsh light on the policy practiced by Sweden and other European countries of forcibly returning rejected Afghan asylum seekers to their homeland, one of the world's most dangerous places.

But while her protest at least temporarily halted that particular deportation, there is no indication that the policy will end. Thousands of Afghans who seek sanctuary in Europe are routinely returned against their will.

Afghanistan's protracted war has made it the leading source of refugees, after Syria. The country has struggled to maintain peace and fight the Taliban insurgency that followed the American-led invasion in 2001.

Security has worsened since 2017 with the strengthening of the Taliban and other groups, including a local Islamic State affiliate. In the first half of this year, the civilian death toll reached a record high, according to a report released by the United Nations this month.

In some ways Europe is replicating what Afghanistan's immediate neighbors, notably Pakistan, have done for years: forcibly returning hundreds of thousands of Afghan asylum seekers, including many who had left Afghanistan years or even decades ago.

Gerry Simpson, an associate director of the refugee rights program at Human Rights Watch, said that involuntary returns of Afghans from Europe could "fan the flames" of security disintegration in Afghanistan.

"The recent U.N. statistic on record civilian casualties across Afghanistan — and Afghanistan's ongoing struggle to help the 600,000 Afghan civilians coerced out of Pakistan in 2016 — underscores the need for the E.U. to wait until Afghanistan is more stable before returning asylum seekers to the country," Mr. Simpson said.

Afghans seeking asylum face special legal challenges. Other countries are allowed to forcibly return them to Afghanistan. Refugees fleeing nations at war like Libya, Yemen and Syria cannot be forcibly returned under international law.

A diminished tolerance for migrants in Nordic countries, where generous policies have been walked back in recent years, also make it harder for Afghans to successfully gain asylum. This year, only 31 percent of asylum requests by Afghan adults and minors were accepted by Sweden, migration authorities say, a historic low.

The deportations have led rights groups to call for a halt to involuntary returns of Afghans until the country is more stable.

The United Nations refugee agency has expressed concern that the asylum claims of so many Afghans are rejected despite the violence in their home country. Still, while the agency could declare a moratorium on forced returns, it has not yet taken such a step.

Kathryn Mahoney, a spokeswoman for the refugee agency, said she was not familiar with the details of the case Ms. Ersson had publicized so dramatically.

But Ms. Mahoney said that “we always encourage and advise governments to exercise caution and due diligence before executing any return.”

Ms. Ersson made clear during a news conference on Thursday that she did not expect Sweden’s deportation policy to ease anytime soon.

In fact, her actions didn’t even prevent the deportation of a man her protest had initially been intended to save. The family of the man, Ismaeil Khawari, 26, had reached out to her and other advocates to halt his departure, but he was not aboard the plane when Ms. Ersson arrived.

Instead, Mr. Khawari was driven to Stockholm and was deported to Kabul the next day.

When Ms. Ersson realized he was not among the passengers, she redirected her cause to save an older Afghan man who was also being deported. As of Friday, his whereabouts remained unclear.

Mr. Khawari, however, has arrived back in Afghanistan, where his family says he is already struggling. A sister said he had suffered psychological trauma after witnessing his father’s death more than two decades ago.

“Ismaeil was with my father when he was killed by the Taliban,” said the sister, Basireh Khawari, 21. “He managed to escape when they tried to kill him, too. He couldn’t get away from the image of that memory.”

The family then fled to Iran. Another of Mr. Khawari’s sisters, Donya Khanzadeh, 22, moved to Sweden eight years ago as an unaccompanied minor and successfully applied for asylum. Her sister and mother later joined her and received residency permits as part of a family reunification program. But Mr. Khawari, her brother, was ineligible because he was no longer a minor, Ms. Khanzadeh said.

So he made his way to Sweden alone, and entered the country illegally in 2014, hoping to gain asylum to live with the family in Gotene, on Lake Vanern northeast of Gothenburg. According to his family, Mr. Khawari’s asylum claim was first rejected about 18 months later and he was eventually placed in detention in Gothenburg.

While Swedish authorities acknowledge Afghanistan’s dangers, each asylum application is evaluated on its own merits, said Fredrik Beijer, legal director with the Swedish Migration Agency.

“Asylum cases are always assessed on an individual basis — the individual’s risk,” Mr. Beijer said. “What case does he have? What problems is he presenting? What will happen if he goes back to a place where he comes from?”

If the applicant is not a minor and cannot prove an immediate or recent threat of harassment or persecution, Mr. Beijer said, having family in Sweden and no network in Afghanistan is insufficient.

When Mr. Khawari was deported, his family was given little information on his whereabouts and relied on calls from fellow detainees. His sisters went to the airport on Monday and guessed he might be on the Turkish Airlines flight, alerting Ms. Ersson, who bought the ticket to board so she could stage her livestream protest.

They didn’t know they were wrong until Ms. Ersson disembarked and told them.

On Wednesday afternoon, the family got a call from Mr. Khawari, who was back in Kabul, where he had not lived in more than 20 years.

He told their mother he was in the hospital.

“I’m afraid that Ismaeil will die in Afghanistan like other innocent people,” Ms. Khanzadeh said. “Because it is a place where when you go out of your home you never know if you will return.”

German Conservatives Are Reshaping How Europe Treats Asylum Seekers

By Cristina Maza

[Newsweek](#), July 27, 2018

The conservative Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), a coalition partner of Germany’s embattled Chancellor Angela Merkel, wants to solidify its reputation as a right-leaning political party that’s tough on immigration—and it’s shaking up European policy in the process.

On Friday, the state of Bavaria unveiled its own Center for Asylum and Repatriation to handle the cases of the migrants who have entered Germany from across the Middle East and North Africa. But some experts say that the new center, which will facilitate efforts to deport some migrants from Germany’s southeastern state, is mostly symbolic.

“Right now I don’t think it means much for migrants traveling [to Germany],” Jorn Fleck, associate director of the Future Europe Initiative at the Washington-based Atlantic Council, told *Newsweek*.

“The processing of an asylum request will continue to be processed by the federal office for migration. Bavaria announced a state group to facilitate [the] deportation of people whose asylum applications have been rejected. They are creating a new agency at the state level to oversee this. It’s pure electioneering,” Fleck added.

Bavaria will hold elections in October, and the CSU’s leadership has embarked on a crusade to ensure that it doesn’t lose votes to political parties that have taken a stronger stance against migration. But in the process, it’s damaged the position of the federal government’s ruling coalition and launched tense policy discussions with other members of the European Union.

Germany’s Interior Minister Horst Seehofer, who is also the leader of the CSU, threatened to resign from his position if Germany did not begin blocking the entrance of migrants at

the border. Merkel, who has long supported an open border policy for migrants and refugees traveling to Europe, opposed Seehofer's idea. Germany has accepted over 1 million migrants since the flow of migration began in earnest in 2015.

Nevertheless, she was forced to seek a compromise lest Seehofer's resignation cause her government to fall.

After holding several emergency meetings with her European counterparts in June, Merkel agreed to set up asylum processing camps, known as "transit centers," for migrants both inside and outside of Europe. It was a stunning reversal of policy for Germany and Merkel.

According to this plan, migrants who had already applied for asylum in another EU country would be returned to the country from which they first filed their request. The policy would see migrants held in detention centers, many of which will lie on the Germany-Austria border, until their asylum claims are assessed. The migrants could then potentially be sent back to other countries after processing.

The announcement sparked criticism from Germany's neighbor Austria, which threatened to tighten its borders in response to Berlin's new regulations. Seehofer later pledged that Bavaria, which borders Austria, would not send migrants back for Vienna to process.

The Atlantic Council's Fleck, meanwhile, argues that the agreement on transit centers lacked many important details, including whether migrants should be required to apply for asylum in the first European Union country they enter. The EU's Dublin regulation stipulates that asylum applications should be processed at the first irregular point of entry.

"I think the agreement bought time, but it lacked a lot of detail," Fleck told Newsweek. "You haven't had detail about what they do with migrants who travel directly to Germany after they enter from another country under the Dublin agreement. There were expressions of good will, but not concrete agreements as such."

For its part, Bavaria has reportedly started using its state police to tighten the border with Austria and ensure that asylum seekers don't enter without passing through the right processing channels.

EU members in Brussels have also been discussing ways to strengthen the EU's external borders. And Germany, Austria, and Italy have announced plans to close what is known as the "southern migrant route," although it is unclear exactly how that will be done. Seehofer has played an active role in these discussions.

Bavarian Leader Takes Softer Line On Migrants Ahead Of Vote

[Associated Press](#), July 27, 2018

BERLIN (AP) – The governor of Bavaria is striking a softer tone on refugees, saying he wants a "balance" between

helping those entitled to asylum and swiftly deporting those who aren't.

Markus Soeder opened a center for asylum and repatriation Friday as part of the southern German state's efforts to streamline asylum procedures, which sometimes take years.

Soeder has been criticized for his tough stance on migration, including his use of the phrase "asylum tourism" to describe people moving to Germany if their application is rejected elsewhere in Europe.

Recent opinion polls showed Soeder's conservative Christian Social Union party getting under 40 percent of the vote ahead of state elections in October.

The opening of the new asylum processing center in Manching, north of Munich, was accompanied by protests from pro-migrant groups.

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Canada Using DNA, Ancestry Websites To Investigate Migrants

[Reuters](#), July 27, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

NATIONAL NEWS

Trump Slams 'Haters' In The Media For Trying To Undermine America

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump said Sunday that he won't allow journalists who are driven "insane" by their hatred of him to ruin America.

"I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry," Mr. Trump tweeted.

He was responding to A.G. Sulzberger, publisher of The New York Times, who said he recently urged the president in a private meeting to stop calling the press "the enemy of the people."

"I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence," Mr. Sulzberger said in a statement.

The president fired back on Twitter Sunday afternoon, "When the media – driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome – reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk! Very unpatriotic! Freedom of the press also comes with a responsibility to report the news accurately."

He said the press is trying to distract and cover up his administration's achievements.

"As an example, the failing New York Times and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements – and they will never change!" the president said.

Trump Says The Media Puts The 'Lives Of Many' At Risk In Twitter Rant

By Nikki Schwab

[New York Post](#), July 29, 2018

Hours after the publisher of the New York Times said he warned President Trump that his attacks on news outlets could "lead to violence," the chief executive went on an anti-media tear, decrying the "dying newspaper industry" and claiming that reporting on the government puts lives "not just journalists, at risk."

"When the media – driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome – reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk," the president wrote Sunday in a series of tweets from his New Jersey golf resort without offering any specific proof. "Very unpatriotic! Freedom of the press also comes with a responsibility to report the news accurately."

Trump estimated that 90 percent of the media coverage of his administration is negative, despite what he called "tremendously positive results," adding that it's no wonder the media's polling is at an "all time low!"

"I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry," he continued. "No matter how much they try to distract and cover it up, our country is making great progress under my leadership and I will never stop fighting for the American people!"

Trump then decided to pick a fight with two specific publications.

"As an example, the failing New York Times and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements – and they will never change!" Trump wrote, referring to the newspaper owned by Amazon's Jeff Bezos.

The president's Sunday afternoon screed came after he and the Times publisher, A.G. Sulzberger, released contrasting versions of their White House meeting on July 20.

Trump tweeted that they had talked about "the Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People,'" calling it "Sad!"

After the tweet, Sulzberger issued a statement saying he had "told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous."

"I told him although the phrase 'fake news' is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about labeling journalists 'the enemy of the people,'" Sulzberger said. "I warned that

this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

Trump didn't name the particular news stories that were getting under his skin.

On Sunday, the New York Times features a piece about the president's daughter and top aide Ivanka Trump that pointed out she and her husband Jared Kushner would again serve in a more outward-facing role.

The story includes a joke made by the president — that he "could have had Tom Brady" as a son-in-law. "Instead ... I got Jared Kushner," Trump said, according to five sources who talked to the paper.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported that Trump's new Veterans Affairs secretary, Robert Wilkie, planned to reassign some of the president's political appointees who are working in the agency, because he believes it might help improve morale.

Trump Accuses 'Very Unpatriotic' Journalists Of Putting The 'Lives Of Many' In Peril

By Philip Rucker

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump escalated his feud with the news media on Sunday, accusing journalists of being unpatriotic and endangering lives after the publisher of the New York Times disclosed that he had warned Trump recently that his inflammatory rhetoric about the media could lead to violence.

Trump — who has made "fake news" a rallying cry and labeled journalists the "enemy of the people" — fired off a Twitter tirade Sunday afternoon from his New Jersey golf estate blasting the media for revealing internal government deliberations and for what he considers unfairly negative coverage of his presidency.

"When the media — driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome — reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk! Very unpatriotic!" Trump wrote.

The president went on to say, "I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry," singling out the Times and The Washington Post for writing "bad stories even on very positive achievements."

Trump seems to have been responding to the lengthy statement issued earlier Sunday by Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger, who publicly detailed his July 20 meeting at the White House with the president.

Trump first characterized their discussion as "a very good and interesting meeting," writing in a Sunday morning tweet that he and Sulzberger "spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People.'"

Sulzberger then took issue with Trump's interpretation of their meeting. The president had invited the publisher, and he was accompanied at the White House by James Bennet, the Times's editorial page editor, according to a Times spokeswoman. The spokeswoman said that White House aides asked that the meeting remain "off the record," in keeping with past practice for such meetings, but that the president put it "on the record" with his Sunday tweet.

[Once again, 'fake news' decried by Trump turns out to be true]

Sulzberger said in his statement, based on his and Bennet's notes, that he agreed to the meeting with Trump "to raise concerns about the president's deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric."

"I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous," Sulzberger said. "I told him that although the phrase 'fake news' is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists 'the enemy of the people.' I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

He continued, "I repeatedly stressed that this is particularly true abroad, where the president's rhetoric is being used by some regimes to justify sweeping crackdowns on journalists. I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country's greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press."

The publisher went on to say, "Throughout the conversation I emphasized that if President Trump, like previous presidents, was upset with coverage of his administration he was of course free to tell the world. I made clear repeatedly that I was not asking for him to soften his attacks on The Times if he felt our coverage was unfair. Instead, I implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country."

The White House has provided no details of Trump and Sulzberger's conversation beyond the president's tweet.

"The president regularly meets with members of the media and we can confirm this meeting took place," Mercedes Schlapp, the White House's director of strategic communications, said in an emailed statement.

Sulzberger became the New York Times's publisher in January, succeeding his father, Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr., who is the company's chairman of the board.

Trump regularly expresses fury with the way he is covered in the news media, and he has long had a particular fascination with his coverage in the Times, dating to his many years of struggles to win the respect of Manhattan's elite.

In a speech last week at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Kansas City, Mo., Trump bashed the journalists

covering the event, which drew a rebuke from VFW leadership.

"Don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news," Trump said, gesturing to the press area of the venue.

The president added, "Just remember: What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening."

Also last week, the Trump White House barred CNN correspondent Kaitlan Collins from attending an open media event in the Rose Garden over her questioning of the president earlier that day.

At various moments throughout his presidency, Trump has sought to punish journalists for the way they ask him questions, directing White House staff to bar those reporters from covering official events or to revoke their press credentials. The Washington Post reported this past week.

"These people shouting questions are the worst," Trump has said, according to an administration official. "Why do we have them in here?"

Trump Blasts Media, Calls Journalists 'Very Unpatriotic' For Reporting On Government Affairs

By Brett Samuels

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump on Sunday unleashed a tirade against the media in which he called reporters "unpatriotic" for reporting on the inner workings of the government.

In a series of tweets, the president singled out The New York Times and The Washington Post for writing "bad stories" about his administration, which he amounted to "[selling] out" the country.

"90% of media coverage of my Administration is negative, despite the tremendously positive results we are achieving, it's no surprise that confidence in the media is at an all time low!" Trump tweeted.

"I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry," he added. "No matter how much they try to distract and cover it up, our country is making great progress under my leadership and I will never stop fighting for the American people!"

...accurately. 90% of media coverage of my Administration is negative, despite the tremendously positive results we are achieving, it's no surprise that confidence in the media is at an all time low! I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the...— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

...and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements – and they will never change!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

Trump, who has had a testy relationship with the media since declaring his candidacy, often seeks to discredit coverage he dislikes as “fake news.”

He has at times suggested pulling credentials from reporters, encouraged rally crowds to jeer media and escalated his attacks by labeling journalists the “enemy of the people.”

The White House last week banned CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins from covering an event open to the press after she repeatedly asked questions about Trump’s relationship with his former attorney, Michael Cohen, during a meeting with the leader of the European Commission. Media organizations widely condemned the move.

Despite all that, the White House has on multiple occasions asserted it is committed to a “free press.”

The president’s latest Twitter attacks on the media come hours after he revealed he met with A.G. Sulzberger, the publisher of The New York Times. Trump claimed the two discussed Trump’s belief that the media has become the “enemy of the people.”

The meeting took place on July 20 and had been off the record, The New York Times said in a statement. However, once Trump acknowledged the meeting took place, Sulzberger issued a statement saying he had warned Trump about the danger of his rhetoric toward reporters.

“I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence,” Sulzberger said.

“I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country’s greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press,” he added.

New York Times Publisher And Trump Clash Over President’s Threats Against Journalism

By Mark Landler

[New York Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump and the publisher of The New York Times, A. G. Sulzberger, engaged in a fierce public clash on Sunday over Mr. Trump’s threats against journalism, after Mr. Sulzberger said the president misrepresented a private meeting and Mr. Trump accused The Times and other papers of putting lives at risk with irresponsible reporting.

Mr. Trump said on Twitter that he and Mr. Sulzberger had discussed “the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, ‘Enemy of the People.’ Sad!”

In a five-paragraph statement issued two hours after the tweet, Mr. Sulzberger said he had accepted Mr. Trump’s invitation for the July 20 meeting mainly to raise his concerns about the president’s “deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric.”

“I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous,” said Mr. Sulzberger, who became publisher of The Times on Jan. 1.

“I told him that although the phrase ‘fake news’ is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists ‘the enemy of the people,’” Mr. Sulzberger continued. “I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence.”

This is particularly true overseas, Mr. Sulzberger said, where governments are using Mr. Trump’s words as a pretext to crack down on journalists. He said he warned the president that his attacks were “putting lives at risk” and “undermining the democratic ideals of our nation.”

Mr. Sulzberger’s lengthy, bluntly worded rebuttal was a striking rejoinder to the president by the 37-year-old publisher of a paper with which Mr. Trump has had a long, complicated relationship. And it apparently touched a nerve: The president fired off a series of angry tweets in the afternoon, accusing newspapers of being unpatriotic.

“I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry,” he wrote. “The failing New York Times and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements — and they will never change!”

Mr. Trump, in his initial tweet from his golf club in Bedminster, N.J., on Sunday morning, described the meeting with Mr. Sulzberger as “very good and interesting.” But in referring to the phrase “enemy of the people,” he did not make clear that he himself began using that label about the press during his first year in office.

He has continued to assail the news media at rallies and even at more formal presidential events, encouraging his audiences to chant “CNN sucks!” and to vent their anger at the reporters assembled in the back.

Speaking to veterans in Kansas City, Mo., last week, Mr. Trump said: “Stick with us. Don’t believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news.” As members of the crowd booed and hissed at the press corps, he added, “What you’re seeing and what you’re reading is not what’s happening.”

The president invited Mr. Sulzberger to the Oval Office earlier this month, according to The Times, continuing a tradition of meetings between presidents and the paper’s publishers. James Bennet, the editorial page editor of The Times, accompanied Mr. Sulzberger to the meeting.

In a statement, Mercedes Schlapp, a White House communications adviser, said, “The president regularly meets with members of the media, and we can confirm this meeting took place.” She did not provide any further details of the meeting or explain why the president chose to publicize it.

The White House had requested that the meeting be kept off the record, according to the statement from The Times.

"But with Mr. Trump's tweet this morning," the statement said, "he has put the meeting on the record, so A. G. has decided to respond to the president's characterization of their conversation, based on detailed notes A. G. and James took."

In a telephone interview, Mr. Sulzberger described the meeting with Mr. Trump, whom he had met only once before, as cordial. But he said he went into the Oval Office determined to make a point about what he views as the dangers of the president's inflammatory language.

Mr. Sulzberger recalled telling Mr. Trump at one point that newspapers had begun posting armed guards outside their offices because of a rise in threats against journalists. The president, he said, expressed surprise that they did not already have armed guards.

At another point, Mr. Trump expressed pride in popularizing the phrase "fake news," and said other countries had begun banning it. Mr. Sulzberger responded that those countries were dictatorships and that they were not banning "fake news" but rather independent scrutiny of their actions.

Still, Mr. Sulzberger said, by the end of the session, he felt that Mr. Trump had listened to his arguments. The president, Mr. Sulzberger recalled, told him he was glad that he had raised those issues and would think about them.

Mr. Sulzberger said he bore no illusions that his comments would prompt Mr. Trump to curb his attacks on the news media. He said he encouraged the president to complain about news coverage in The Times that he viewed as unfair. But he appealed to him not to systematically attack journalists and journalism around the world.

Tensions between Times publishers and presidents are nothing new. Early in Bill Clinton's presidency, Mr. Clinton complained to Mr. Sulzberger's father, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., who was then publisher, about the paper's editorials.

Mr. Sulzberger told the president he liked to think of them as "tough love," according to Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones, who wrote a history of the Sulzberger family.

"Well, just don't forget the love part," Mr. Clinton replied.

A decade later, Mr. Sulzberger and top editors of The Times were summoned to the Oval Office by President George W. Bush in an unsuccessful effort to prevent the paper from publishing a long-delayed article about the National Security Agency's monitoring of phone calls without court-approved warrants.

"Generally speaking, presidents, in their dealings with newspaper publishers, have wanted to court them," said Martha Joynt Kumar, a longtime expert in the relationship between the press and the White House. "They think if they

bring the publishers in and explain their goals and intentions, that would be helpful."

Mr. Trump regularly mocks "the failing New York Times," but he has also visited its offices and spoken to its journalists. This weekend, The Times published an article about Mr. Trump's daughter Ivanka and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, which noted that they had invited the younger Mr. Sulzberger to a dinner at their home in Manhattan in honor of Nikki R. Haley, the American ambassador to the United Nations.

New York Times Publisher A.G. Sulzberger Chides President Donald Trump Over 'Fake News' Claims

By Tom Vanden Brook

[USA Today](#), July 29, 2018

The publisher of The New York Times on Sunday disputed President Donald Trump's account of a private meeting concerning the president's inflammatory language about the news media, particularly the terms "fake news" and "enemy of the people."

Trump tweeted Sunday that he and A.G. Sulzberger, the Times' publisher, had a very good and interesting meeting" at the White House.

"Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake news has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People.' Sad!" he said.

That prompted a five-paragraph statement from Sulzberger, who said Trump had mischaracterized their meeting on July 20. He accepted Trump's invitation for the meeting, Sulzberger said, because Trump's language about the press had become "increasingly dangerous."

Trump's use of the term "fake news" will lead to violence against journalists, Sulzberger said.

"I told him that although the phrase 'fake news' is untrue and harmful, I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists 'the enemy of the people,'" Sulzberger continued. "I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

Sulzberger, according to his statement, told Trump that he was not asking him to soften his criticism of stories he considered unfair but to "reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country."

Trump regularly disparages news coverage that he doesn't like as "fake news," and has labeled the mainstream news media as an "enemy of the people."

Later on Sunday, the president again was critical of the media, and the Times and the Washington Post in particular.

"I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry," he tweeted.

"No matter how much they try to distract and cover it up, our country is making great progress under my leadership and I will never stop fighting for the American people! As an example, the failing New York Times and the Amazon Washington Post do nothing but write bad stories even on very positive achievements – and they will never change!"

At the Veterans of Foreign Wars annual meeting last week in Kansas City, Trump blasted the news media to the cheers of many in the crowd.

"Stick with us," Trump said. "Don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news. What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening."

Times Publisher Asks Trump To Reconsider Anti-Media Rhetoric

By Darlene Superville

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

The publisher of The New York Times said Sunday he "implored" President Donald Trump at a private White House meeting this month to reconsider his broad attacks on journalists, calling the president's anti-press rhetoric "not just divisive but increasingly dangerous."

In a statement, A.G. Sulzberger said he decided to comment publicly after Trump revealed their off-the-record meeting to his more than 53 million Twitter followers on Sunday. Trump's aides had requested that the July 20 meeting not be made public, Sulzberger said.

"Had a very good and interesting meeting at the White House with A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher of the New York Times. Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People.' Sad!" Trump wrote.

Hours after that exchange, Trump resumed his broadside against the media in a series of tweets that included a pledge not to let the country "be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the ... dying newspaper industry."

Sulzberger, who succeeded his father as publisher on Jan. 1, said his main purpose for accepting the meeting was to "raise concerns about the president's deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric."

"I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous," he said.

Sulzberger said he told Trump that while the phrase "fake news" is untrue and harmful, "I am far more concerned about his labeling journalists 'the enemy of the people.' I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

Sulzberger, who attended the meeting with James Bennet, the Times' editorial page editor, said he stressed that

leaders outside the U.S. are already using Trump's rhetoric to justify cracking down on journalists.

"I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country's greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press," the publisher said.

Sulzberger added that he made clear that he was not asking Trump to soften his attacks against the Times if he thinks the newspaper's coverage is unfair. "Instead, I implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country," he said.

Trump reads the Times and gives interviews to its reporters. But the president — who, like all politicians, is concerned about his image — also regularly derides the newspaper as the "failing New York Times." However, the Times' ownership company in May reported a 3.8 percent increase in first-quarter revenue compared to the same period in 2017.

The president, who lashes out over media coverage of him and the administration that he deems unfair, has broadly labeled the news media the "enemy of the people" and regularly accuses reporters of spreading "fake news" — the term he often uses for stories he dislikes.

Hours after his tweet about the Sulzberger meeting, Trump renewed his criticism of the media in a series of posts in which he accused reporters of disclosing "internal deliberations of government" and said that can endanger "the lives of many." He did not cite examples but wrote "Very unpatriotic!" and said freedom of the press "comes with a responsibility to report the news ... accurately," a sentiment that journalists share.

Trump also claimed that 90 percent of the coverage of his administration is negative, leading to an "all time low" in public confidence in the media. He cited the Times and The Washington Post, two favorite targets, and claimed, "They will never change!"

Last week, Trump told hundreds of people attending the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Kansas City, Missouri: "Don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news," as he gestured toward journalists at the back of the room.

He also told them to remember "what you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening."

Sulzberger said he accepted the meeting because Times publishers have a history of meeting with presidential administrations and other public figures who have concerns with the publication's coverage of them.

After Sulzberger took charge, Trump tweeted that his ascension gave the paper a "last chance" to fulfill its founder's vision of impartiality.

In the January tweet, Trump urged the new publisher to “Get impartial journalists of a much higher standard, lose all of your phony and non-existent ‘sources,’ and treat the President of the United States FAIRLY, so that the next time I (and the people) win, you won’t have to write an apology to your readers for a job poorly done!”

Tension between the administration and the news media was put on display last week after the White House told a CNN correspondent that she could not attend a Rose Garden event that was open to all credentialed media.

The correspondent, Kaitlan Collins, said she was barred because she asked Trump questions he did not like at a press event in the Oval Office earlier that day. The White House said Collins was barred because she refused to leave the Oval Office after being repeatedly asked to do so. Other journalists who were in the room at the time disputed the White House account.

Anthony Scaramucci, who spent 11 days as White House communications director last year before he was fired over an obscenity-laced tirade against other staffers in an interview, said he disagreed with the decision to put Collins in the “penalty box.” He told CNN’s “State of the Union” the order to bar Collins likely came from Trump because “he likes to be respected.”

Vice President Mike Pence, in a separate interview, said the administration believes in freedom of the press.

“But maintaining the decorum that is due at the White House I think is an issue that we’ll continue to work for,” he said in a taped interview broadcast Sunday on Fox Business Network.

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NYT Publisher Disputes Trump’s Retelling Of Off-The-Record Conversation

Trump has not abandoned some of his most highly charged rhetoric about the press, including calling journalists the ‘enemy of the people.’

By Andrew Restuccia And Brent D. Griffiths

[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

It was supposed to be an off-the-record meeting. But President Donald Trump had other plans.

On Sunday morning, nine days after sitting down with New York Times Publisher A.G. Sulzberger at the White House, Trump decided to make the once-private meeting public. At 8:30 a.m., the president declared on Twitter that he had talked with Sulzberger, one of most powerful media executives in the country, about “the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media,” sending the Times scrambling to offer its own version of events.

The Times has long been a convenient foil for Trump, a regular Times reader who has a fascination with the paper despite his loud criticism of its coverage. So it was no surprise that Trump would try to spin the meeting with Sulzberger to his advantage.

“Had a very good and interesting meeting at the White House with A.G. Sulzberger, Publisher of the New York Times,” Trump wrote on Twitter. “Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, ‘Enemy of the People.’ Sad!”

The tweet forced the Times to explain in detail what happened at the meeting, arguing that Trump’s decision to discuss the meeting publicly nullified their off-the-record agreement.

“I told the president directly that I thought that his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous,” Sulzberger said in a statement released by the Times about the July 20 meeting at the White House. “I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence.”

“I repeatedly stressed that this is particularly true abroad, where the president’s rhetoric is being used by some regimes to justify sweeping crackdowns on journalists,” Sulzberger continued. “I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country’s greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press.”

Sulzberger’s pleas appeared to have had little effect on Trump, who last week bashed the news media during a speech in Missouri and whose White House separately barred a CNN reporter from covering an event. And the president appears to have no plans to abandon his most highly charged rhetoric about the press, including calling journalists the “enemy of the people,” a phrase he repeated in his Sunday tweet about the meeting.

Later on Sunday, Trump showed no change of heart in a series of tweets about the media, saying that the New York Times and Washington Post “do nothing but write bad stories.”

“When the media – driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome – reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk! Very unpatriotic!” he wrote in tweets. “I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the...dying newspaper industry.”

The conversation between Trump and Sulzberger came amid heightened tensions with the media. The president has continued to claim that coverage he does not like is “fake news.” During the speech in Missouri this past week, Trump said what the media is covering is “not what’s happening” and urged his supporters not to believe the news. “Don’t believe

the crap you see from these people — the fake news,” he said during the speech.

Meanwhile, a CNN reporter was barred from covering an event last week at the White House, a decision that prompted widespread outrage from journalists.

Sulzberger’s paper has been a frequent target of Trump, who has attacked both the Times and some of its reporters, including White House correspondent Maggie Haberman, by name.

It’s common for publishers of major newspapers, including the Times, to meet with U.S. presidents. Sulzberger also attended a recent dinner party at the home of Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, according to a story about the couple published on Saturday. But the Times’ critics pounced on Sulzberger’s meeting with the president, arguing it gave Trump an opportunity to use the meeting to amplify his attacks on the press.

“The media always gets played by Trump. Always. Going to the meeting, The Times was going to get played,” Neera Tanden, president of the Center for American Progress, a liberal group, wrote on Twitter. “His tweet after the meeting will do more damage than anything gained by going to the meeting. Do you think your pleas will be heard?”

It’s not the first time the Times has had to navigate an off-the-record conversation with Trump. In 2016, BuzzFeed reported that then-presidential candidate Trump wavered on immigration during an off-the-record conversation with the Times’ editorial board, a revelation that put pressure on Trump to give his consent to release the audio and transcript of the discussion (which he resisted). The Times ultimately decided to honor their off-the-record agreement.

Sulzberger said he told Trump that previous presidents have taken issue with the coverage of their administration but that he should reconsider his broader anti-press diatribes.

“I made clear repeatedly that I was not asking for him to soften his attacks on The Times if he felt our coverage was unfair,” Sulzberger said. “Instead, I implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country.”

The statement from The New York Times said Sulzberger had gone to the White House accompanied by James Bennet, who oversees the editorial page of The Times.

“Mr. Trump’s aides requested that the meeting be off the record, which has also been the practice for such meetings in the past,” the statement said. “But with Mr. Trump’s tweet this morning, he has put the meeting on the record, so A.G. has decided to respond to the president’s characterization of their conversation, based on detailed notes A.G. and James took.”

New York Times Publisher: I Told Trump His Anti-Press Language Is ‘Increasingly Dangerous’

By Daniel Chaitin

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

New York Times publisher Arthur Gregg Sulzberger said that when he met with President Trump at the White House, he told the president that his anti-press rhetoric is “increasingly dangerous.”

In a statement issued hours after Trump boasted of having a “very good and interesting” that touched on “fake news,” Sulzberger said that phrase is “untrue and harmful” but a more pressing concern was Trump labeling journalists “the enemy of the people.”

“I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence,” he said in a statement Sunday.

The meeting, which the White House confirmed to the Washington Post took place on July 20, came nearly a month after a shooter killed five journalists from the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Md.

“I repeatedly stressed that this is particularly true abroad, where the president’s rhetoric is being used by some regimes to justify sweeping crackdowns on journalists,” Sulzberger said. “I warned that it was putting lives at risk, that it was undermining the democratic ideals of our nation, and that it was eroding one of our country’s greatest exports: a commitment to free speech and a free press.”

Sulzberger also said that he didn’t discourage Trump from attacking the Times in particular “if he felt our coverage was unfair,” but “implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism, which I believe are dangerous and harmful to our country.”

Trump has often calls news outlets, including the Times, that publish negative coverage of him or his administration “fake news.” He has also called the Times the “Failing New York Times,” claiming it is struggling financially, even as the outlet has seen its number of subscribers rise and revenue increase during Trump’s administration.

Sulzberger became the publisher of the Times on Jan. 1. He is the son of Arthur O. Sulzberger Jr., who is chairman the New York Times Company and preceded his son as publisher of the Times.

The younger Sulzberger became the sixth member of the Ochs-Sulzberger family to take over the paper since 1896.

Mike Pence On White House Banning CNN Reporter: We Are ‘Maintaining Decorum That Is Due’

By Kelly Cohen

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

Vice President Mike Pence on Sunday defended the White House's decision to ban CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins from an event last week.

"This administration believes in the freedom of the press, and President Trump and I and our entire administration have provided extraordinary access to the media. The president answers to many questions in so many different settings, and I can assure you that we'll continue to do that," Pence told Fox Business's Maria Bartiromo in a Sunday interview on Fox News.

On @MariaBartiromo's show, @VP defends White House banning @kaitlancollins from a public event for asking questions.

"This administration believes in freedom of the press... but maintaining the decorum that is due at the WH I think is an issue we'll continue to work for." pic.twitter.com/ERRD1vZKlh— Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) July 29, 2018

Collins shouted questions to Trump during a pool spray last week, and was then prevented from covering an event in the Rose Garden later that day.

The White House said Collins was disrespectful to Trump, though it is not unusual for reporters to shout questions at the president. News networks and journalists have since come up in solidarity and support for Collins.

Pence explained that "maintaining the decorum that is due at the White House I think is an issue that we'll continue to work forward."

When pressed about the rocky relationship between the White House and the press, Pence said he is "confident that they'll be able to work out this relationship in a positive way."

Vice President Mike Pence Says White House Stands For Freedom Of The Press

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday the White House defends the freedom of the press, responding to a backlash after President Trump's communications staff banned a CNN reporter from a press conference last week.

Kaitlan Collins, CNN's White House reporter, was banned Wednesday afternoon from covering a press conference in the Rose Garden, where the president announced his new trade agreements with the European Union.

The removal of Ms. Collins from the event came after she shouted questions at the president earlier Wednesday about his former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, and a potential meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ms. Collins was acting as the pool reporter for the day, sharing her reports with other news outlets. Fox News announced it stood with CNN, saying the decision to keep

Ms. Collins from covering the president's press conference interfered with the press's unfettered access.

The White House called Ms. Collins' questioning "inappropriate."

"We stand for the freedom of the press in this White House," Mr. Pence told Fox News on Sunday, adding that maintaining decorum in the White House is also an issue.

He said he's confident the White House staff and the press corps will be able to work out this issue in a positive way.

"This administration believes in the freedom of the press and President Trump and I and our administration have provided extraordinary access to the media," he said.

Communicator In Chief: Trump Manages Relations With Media On His Own Terms

By Dave Boyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump recently warned thousands of veterans at a convention not to believe the "crap" about him in the media, and his White House last week barred a reporter from a public event as punishment for asking him uncomfortable questions loudly during an Oval Office meeting.

On Sunday, the president engaged in a war of words with the publisher of The New York Times, who said Mr. Trump's portrayal of the press as an enemy of the people is "dangerous and harmful to our country."

"I told the president directly I thought his language was not just divisive but increasingly dangerous," Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger said of a recent meeting with Mr. Trump. "I warned that this inflammatory language is contributing to a rise in threats against journalists and will lead to violence."

Mr. Trump fired back on Twitter, "I will not allow our great country to be sold out by anti-Trump haters in the dying newspaper industry."

"When the media – driven insane by their Trump Derangement Syndrome – reveals internal deliberations of our government, it truly puts the lives of many, not just journalists, at risk! Very unpatriotic! Freedom of the press also comes with a responsibility to report the news accurately," he tweeted.

Just another week in the life of one of the most media-accessible presidents in modern history, one who is taking on an ever-growing share of the White House communications role as his clashes with the press sharpen.

Although his relationship with the media has hit a low point, it's undeniable that Mr. Trump has made himself available to journalists more often than his predecessors during his first 18 months in office.

He has taken questions frequently before departing the White House on Marine One, held forth with reporters for long

periods in Cabinet meetings and bantered with journalists on Air Force One to an extent not seen in decades, if ever.

"He does a ton of press himself," said Matt Schlapp, chairman of the American Conservative Union and a former political director to President George W. Bush. "Unlike any other president I've ever seen, he answers questions at almost everything he goes to."

Despite his availability, Mr. Trump increasingly is seeking to manage relations with the media on his terms.

On Friday, he announced that he would hold a "news conference" on the South Lawn to trumpet strong second-quarter growth of 4.1 percent in gross domestic product. The president spoke from a podium about the "amazing" success, invited his economic advisers to say a few words and then turned on his heels and went back inside the White House without taking a single question.

Mr. Trump will hold a joint press conference Monday at the White House with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. It will be his 12th press conference this year. President Obama held a total of 19 press conferences during his second year in office.

Mr. Trump prefers sharing the podium with foreign leaders over solo news conferences — he has held only three solo events out of 33 overall in his presidency. At joint press conferences, the questions are usually limited to two journalists from each country, so sessions typically are shorter.

Mr. Obama held seven solo press conferences in his first year; George W. Bush held four.

Mr. Trump also has been firing off tweets to his 53 million followers at a more rapid pace, averaging 11 per day in the past month. Many of them focus on special counsel Robert Mueller's "witch hunt" and on Republican candidates he is endorsing in the midterm elections. During his first six months in office, the president was tweeting about six times a day.

On Sunday, Mr. Trump tweeted that had a "very good and interesting meeting" with Mr. Sulzberger at the White House on July 20.

"Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, 'Enemy of the People.' Sad!" Mr. Trump tweeted.

In a statement, Mr. Sulzberger said he met with the president primarily to address his "deeply troubling anti-press rhetoric."

"I implored him to reconsider his broader attacks on journalism," he said.

Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday on Fox News that the White House defends the First Amendment.

"This administration believes in the freedom of the press, and President Trump and I and our administration have provided extraordinary access to the media," he said.

As the president takes his message to the people on Twitter and in media interviews with largely friendly outlets such as Fox News, the White House has been cutting back on the number of press briefings conducted by spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders. Mrs. Sanders has held only eight briefings in the past two months. In January, she held 11.

The White House didn't respond to requests for comment, but a Republican close to the West Wing communications team said they have always operated in the belief that Mr. Trump is his own best spokesman.

"They'll [hold a briefing] when they feel like it's necessary to get out there," the Republican said. "Right now, they're attempting to work around it through the president himself."

Mr. Schlapp, whose wife, Mercedes, serves as White House director of strategic communications, said the dwindling number of briefings is "completely logical."

"It really doesn't make sense with this president to have a person in the spokesperson's job be doing as many briefings when he's doing the briefings himself," said Mr. Schlapp. "He's not doing it in that [press] room, but he's doing it at all the events and on Twitter. Just let him speak. It's his administration. He is making the major decisions. And he knows why he's making those decisions, and he knows best how to explain them. So why put an intermediary there every day?"

It's not lost on the White House that the press has turned increasingly hostile in the on-camera briefings, especially in the wake of the controversy over the administration's rescinded policy of separating illegal immigrant children from their parents at the southern border.

The administration also has been cutting back on press briefings at the Pentagon. Defense Department spokeswoman Dana W. White has not held an on-camera question-and-answer session with reporters since May, and veteran reporters say the climate for journalists inside the Pentagon has worsened.

Defense Secretary James Mattis has not appeared in the Pentagon briefing room since April, although he did hold an off-camera session with reporters last month. Pentagon officials say it's simply not a priority to keep journalists happy.

The administration's relationship with the press took an even more confrontational turn last week when White House Deputy Chief of Staff Bill Shine and Mrs. Sanders told CNN reporter Kaitlan Collins that she was not welcome to a Rose Garden event where the president was to speak. They were reacting to her questioning of Mr. Trump in the Oval Office earlier in the day about his estranged personal attorney, Michael Cohen, and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

During the week, Mr. Trump sidestepped several questions on camera about Mr. Cohen, who is said to have turned on his former boss in the special counsel's investigation.

The Washington Post, citing current and former administration officials, reported Friday that Mr. Trump has sought to punish other journalists for the way they ask him questions and directed White House staff to ban Jim Acosta of CNN and April Ryan of American Urban Radio from covering official events or even to revoke their press credentials.

Mrs. Sanders said Ms. Collins continued to call out questions to the president after the press had been told to leave the room, but it's an occurrence at nearly every Oval Office meeting that Mr. Trump holds with media in attendance.

Former White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci said on CNN Sunday that the decision to bar Ms. Collins "probably came from the president."

"He likes to be respected. He was probably frustrated at that moment," Mr. Scaramucci said. He added that he believes the White House's strategy toward the press will galvanize reporters against it.

"Having a war declaration or having that level of antagonism with the press does not help the president, does not serve his interests going into the midterms or the re-election," Mr. Scaramucci said.

Mr. Pence said the relationship between any White House and any press corps "is always healthy and robust and occasionally represents disagreements. I'm confident they'll be able to work out this relationship in a positive way."

White House Correspondents' Association President Olivier Knox said the White House's move to bar a reporter from a public event "cannot stand."

But it's not clear what recourse the journalists group has. Nor does it seem likely that the president will start to gain more positive media coverage. One study pegs Mr. Trump's share of negative news coverage at 92 percent.

The Media Research Center, a conservative watchdog, found the vast majority of sound bites on ABC, CBS and NBC nightly newscasts aired from Mr. Trump's inauguration through last month were negative. The networks devoted nearly 17 hours of coverage to immigration, including the travel ban and the recent enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy at the border.

Mr. Trump tweeted, "90% of media coverage of my Administration is negative, despite the tremendously positive results we are achieving, it's no surprise that confidence in the media is at an all time low! ... No matter how much they try to distract and cover it up, our country is making great progress under my leadership, and I will never stop fighting for the American people!"

Mr. Shine, a former top executive at Fox News who came on board the West Wing this month, is expected to have more influence over the images and video of the president that every White House devotes significant effort to get right.

"They've done a great job on social media, but I think they could up their game when it comes to the video and pictures that come out of events," Mr. Schlapp said.

Mr. Trump has been known to chide a world-class news photographer for giving him a "double chin" in a picture, or forbidding network camera operators to tape him in the press cabin of Air Force One, apparently because he dislikes the lighting on the plane.

On a more substantive front, the president is so frustrated with media coverage of his policies that he told the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars convention last week to disregard completely the negative news reports about his trade dispute with the European Union.

"Just remember: What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening," the president said. "Just stick with us; don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news."

The audience cheered Mr. Trump, and many in the crowd booed the news media in the convention hall.

A development related to the special counsel's sprawling investigation has opened a new communications battleground for Mr. Trump. Mr. Cohen has hired former Clinton White House attorney and veteran Washington operative Lanny Davis to represent him in the investigation.

Just in the past week, Mr. Davis released to the media a recording of Mr. Cohen and Mr. Trump discussing a potential payment in 2016 to a former Playboy model who claims to have had an affair with Mr. Trump.

Soon afterward, reports surfaced that Mr. Cohen would refute the president's claim that he didn't know about a June 2016 meeting between Trump campaign officials and Russian operatives at Trump Tower in New York.

"That's going to be much more of a challenge, because Lanny Davis has been at the top of this game for a long time," the Republican operative said. "He worked for the Clinton White House, and he understands hardball communications. It is a problem."

Naturally, Mr. Trump took to Twitter to answer the accusations, saying again that he didn't know about the Trump Tower meeting in advance.

He said he felt compelled to explain the controversy "so the Fake News doesn't waste my time with dumb questions."

Trump: Robert Mueller Has Conflict Of Interest

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump suggested Sunday special counsel Robert Mueller has a conflict of interest and shouldn't be investigating the Trump campaign and whether it colluded with Russians during the 2016 election.

The president said he turned Mr. Mueller down to head the FBI following the firing of former FBI director James Comey last year.

Mr. Trump also said Mr. Comey is a close friend of Mr. Mueller.

"Is Robert Mueller ever going to release his conflicts of interest with respect to President Trump, including the fact that we had a very nasty & contentious business relationship, I turned him down to head the FBI (one day before appointment as S.C.) & Comey is his close friend," the president tweeted.

In a subsequent tweet, the president questioned why Mr. Mueller isn't investigating Hillary Clinton's campaign and its work with former British spy Christopher Steele, who authored the infamous Trump dossier.

"Also, why is Mueller only appointing Angry Dems, some of whom have worked for Crooked Hillary, others, including himself, have worked for Obama....And why isn't Mueller looking at all of the criminal activity & real Russian Collusion on the

Trump Lashes Out At Mueller For Alleged Conflicts Of Interest

By Brett Samuels

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump on Sunday renewed his accusations that special counsel Robert Mueller has "conflicts of interest" in his investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election, citing a previous business dispute between the two men.

In a sequence of tweets attacking the special counsel's credibility, Trump noted that he and Mueller had "a very nasty & contentious business relationship."

Is Robert Mueller ever going to release his conflicts of interest with respect to President Trump, including the fact that we had a very nasty & contentious business relationship, I turned him down to head the FBI (one day before appointment as S.C.) & Comey is his close friend..— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

Trump has alleged on multiple occasions via Twitter that Mueller has unspecified conflicts of interest, however Sunday's tweet marks the first time he's elaborated beyond such accusations.

The president seemingly confirmed a New York Times report from January that said Trump attempted to fire Mueller in June 2017 over alleged conflicts of interest.

The Times reported that Trump listed three conflicts he believed should disqualify Mueller: A dispute over fees at Trump's National Golf Club in Virginia, his interview for FBI director before being named special counsel, and Mueller's previous employment at a law firm that represents Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

Trump reportedly backed off his demand after White House counsel Don McGahn refused Trump's order and threatened to quit.

Multiple reports indicated Trump interviewed Mueller for the vacancy, but it's unclear if Trump turned him down for the position before he was named special counsel in May 2017.

Trump's accusations about Mueller's alleged conflicts of interest came amid a string of tweets in which he claimed the special counsel's team is filled with Democrats.

Trump also falsely claimed Mueller's probe was sparked by the so-called Steele Dossier, and questioned why the special counsel was not investigating Democrats.

...Also, why is Mueller only appointing Angry Dems, some of whom have worked for Crooked Hillary, others, including himself, have worked for Obama....And why isn't Mueller looking at all of the criminal activity & real Russian Collusion on the Democrats side-Podesta, Dossier?— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

There is No Collusion! The Robert Mueller Rigged Witch Hunt, headed now by 17 (increased from 13, including an Obama White House lawyer) Angry Democrats, was started by a fraudulent Dossier, paid for by Crooked Hillary and the DNC. Therefore, the Witch Hunt is an illegal Scam!— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 29, 2018

The president has attacked Mueller's investigation with increasing regularity in recent months, frequently decrying it as a "witch hunt" and a "hoax" in an attempt to discredit Mueller and his probe.

The special counsel has thus far indicted or gotten guilty pleas from more than 20 Russians as part of his probe, as well as four former Trump associates.

Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort is set to go on trial this week as part of the investigation.

Rudy Giuliani: Deal To Have Trump Sit Down With Robert Mueller Could Happen Next Week

By Kelly Cohen

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

Rudy Giuliani, the personal attorney for Donald Trump, said the president may reach an agreement regarding a meeting with special counsel Robert Mueller this week or next week.

"We have negotiations going on with them, we have an outstanding offer to them," Giuliani said on CBS' "Face the Nation," declining to describe what that offer entails.

However, he said there "is an area of questioning and a group of restrictions on it that we could live with."

Giuliani said it relates "basically to the Russia collusion thing, which we think there's no evidence and the president didn't do anything wrong."

"Maybe this week, maybe next week," Giuliani said when asked when an interview would be set.

Giuliani, a former mayor of New York City, told CBS earlier this year that he expected to have a decision on July 4 whether Trump would interview with Mueller's team.

"We would like to see it limited to some specific questions about the heart of the probe — the Russian alleged collusion. We think that those questions could be answered quickly. We think two hours. They probably think four. So let's settle at three. That's the way you do a negotiation in good faith in this area. They have been in good faith," he said at the time.

Mueller has been reviewing Trump's Twitter feed as part of his probe into obstruction of justice, the New York Times reported Thursday.

The Times said Mueller was also reviewing through negative statements from Trump toward Attorney General Jeff Sessions and former FBI Director James Comey, whom he fired May 2017.

The president has continually said he would sit with Mueller's team amid his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election and connections with the Trump campaign.

Giuliani Says Trump Could Soon Decide On Mueller Interview

By Hope Yen

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani said Sunday the president may be open to an interview with special counsel Robert Mueller even if it involves some questions about alleged obstruction of justice in the federal investigation into Russia interference in the 2016 election.

Giuliani said negotiations continue with Mueller's office regarding the conditions for an interview, which Trump's legal team spelled out in a proposal this month.

Giuliani said Trump's team wants an interview basically limited to questions involving alleged collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia in the 2016 election, arguing that no "legal basis" exists for Trump to be questioned about obstruction. But Giuliani also told CBS' "Face the Nation" that Trump might be willing to address obstruction in some form.

"There is a sort of area of questioning and a group of restrictions on it that we could live with, I think," Giuliani said. "We have an outstanding offer to them. They haven't responded in about a week to 10 days. I don't hold that against them."

Giuliani said Trump could make a decision this week or next on whether to sit for an interview.

Trump has repeatedly insisted that he's willing to be interviewed by Mueller's team. But Giuliani has said Trump's legal team is less enthusiastic because Mueller and his staff might seek to believe witnesses who contradict Trump's account, such as former FBI Director James Comey.

Trump has given varying reasons for firing Comey in May 2017.

"We don't see the legal basis for a president obstructing by merely taking an action in firing somebody that he had every right to fire. And about 10 good reasons to fire. So we don't just acknowledge though the basis for that," Giuliani said. "But, you know, we might consider a few questions in that area also."

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Manafort's Finances Will Be In Spotlight In High-Stakes Trial

The outcome of the trial of Trump's ex-campaign chair is likely to affect the course of Mueller's Russia investigation

By Aruna Viswanatha

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Trump CFO Thrust Into Legal Spotlight

Allen Weisselberg, little known outside Trump's inner circle, had the ability to play hardball

By Rebecca Davis O'Brien And Alexandra Berzon

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 28, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Giuliani Seeks To Quell Speculation Over Cohen

By Brett Samuels

[The Hill](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani hit the Sunday morning show circuit to go on the offensive in the wake of escalating speculation that Trump's former longtime attorney and personal fixer, Michael Cohen, may turn on the president.

Giuliani insisted to Fox News's Chris Wallace that he doesn't believe the president's camp is "at war" with Cohen, but his charges that Cohen is a "liar," a "manipulator" and a "scoundrel" suggested otherwise.

"It seems to me his default position is to lie," Giuliani said on "Fox News Sunday."

"He's a bad liar because he lies in contradiction to tapes and he lies in contradiction to what I just said is probably supported by anywhere from two to five witnesses," he added.

Cohen is under investigation in New York's Southern District for bank fraud and campaign finance law violations. He has appeared increasingly willing to cooperate with investigators in recent weeks, and the revelation that Cohen secretly recorded conversations has raised questions about what incriminating information he may have on the president.

Cohen raised the stakes when he reportedly claimed that then-candidate Trump knew of his son's plans to meet with a Russian lawyer at Trump Tower during his 2016 presidential campaign. Cohen indicated he is willing to tell as much to special counsel Robert Mueller. The president and his allies have repeatedly denied having known about the sit-down.

Giuliani on Sunday sought to quell speculation over whether there are additional recordings featuring Trump.

Giuliani told CBS's "Face the Nation" that Trump's legal team is aware of 183 separate conversations that Cohen recorded. Of those, he said Trump is "discussed at any length" on 11 or 12, and is only recorded on one tape.

CNN aired audio from that tape last week, which features Cohen and the president discussing a payment to purchase the account of a former Playboy model who alleges she had an affair with Trump in 2006.

But the CNN tape clears Trump of wrongdoing in that matter, Giuliani argued. The lawyer said Cohen's propensity to record conversations made Cohen's Trump Tower claim suspect.

"If he taped everything else, why the heck didn't he tape this? It's not on tape," he said on Fox.

"And he's capable, I think, unfortunately, of doctoring tapes," he continued. "Hasn't done that. It would be hard to do that now since we have an expert all over it. So it's just flat-out untrue."

Giuliani said Trump's anger over the recordings has faded into disappointment. However, that has not prevented the two men from waging a barrage of attacks on Cohen's credibility.

The president last week asked "what kind of lawyer would tape a client," while Giuliani leading up to Sunday branded him a "pathological liar."

On Friday, Trump accused Cohen of "trying to make up stories" to wiggle out of his own legal problems.

On Sunday, the president resurfaced an old tweet from Cohen in which the president's longtime fixer praised Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., for being "transparent" in sharing the emails surrounding the Trump Tower meeting.

Lanny Davis, whom Cohen hired as an attorney earlier this month, has provided few public comments since CNN aired the audio, but he has professed that the "truth is on our side." Davis is a columnist for The Hill.

The shift to a credibility war signals a change in tone from Trump's legal team, which, for weeks, has downplayed concerns that Cohen could pose a legal threat to the president.

On both his CBS and Fox appearances, Giuliani was presented with video of an interview he gave earlier this year in which he encouraged Cohen to cooperate with the government, and praised him as an "honorable lawyer."

"Now I've listened, unfortunately — fortunately from my client's point of view — to many, many hours of tapes and the man is a pathological manipulator, liar," Giuliani said Sunday on Fox.

"I didn't know that," he added. "I didn't know him well, but I had — I knew nothing bad about Michael Cohen until all of this started to happen in the last couple of weeks."

Giuliani Steps Up Attacks On 'Scoundrel' Michael Cohen

By David Beavers

[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

Rudy Giuliani stepped up his attacks on Michael Cohen on Sunday, saying he's "destroyed himself as a witness" in federal investigations and committed a "disbarable offense" by recording his then-client, Donald Trump.

"The man is a pathological manipulator, a liar," Giuliani, now a personal attorney to the president, said on "Fox News Sunday."

Pressed by host Chris Wallace, Giuliani walked back comments he made in a May interview on ABC News, in which he called Cohen an "honest, honorable lawyer."

"Here's what happened: I found out, as everyone did, that he was surreptitiously recording his clients, which is a disbarable offense," Giuliani said. "Obviously, if I knew that, I never would have said he was a reputable lawyer; I'd have said he was a scoundrel."

In light of reports that Trump's formertime attorney and fixer might cooperate with federal prosecutors, Giuliani attacked Cohen's credibility.

"He's destroyed himself as a witness. I've prosecuted 5,000 cases. I'd never prosecute a case on this guy's testimony," Giuliani said. "He's contradicted himself so many times, you'd begin the cross-examination by saying, 'Which lies are you going to tell us today, Michael?'"

Some audio recordings seized from Cohen in an April FBI raid have been handed over to federal prosecutors, according to court filings. A nearly three-minute portion from one tape, in which Trump and Cohen discuss payments to former Playboy model Karen McDougal, was aired by CNN.

'I Want You To Hear Them,' Giuliani Says Of Other Cohen Tapes Discussing Trump

By Robert Costa

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

Rudolph W. Giuliani said Sunday that President Trump is mentioned in about a dozen of the 183 recordings that were seized by federal prosecutors investigating Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen. But Giuliani offered few details on the nature of the ex-changes or the participants in the recordings that have not been made public.

The comments by Giuliani — the president's lawyer handling the ongoing probe by special counsel Robert S. Mueller III into Russian campaign interference and possible obstruction of justice — came days after Cohen's legal team released a recording of a September 2016 conversation between Trump and Cohen that makes it appear that Trump was familiar with a deal model Karen McDougal made to sell the rights to her story of an alleged affair with him.

Giuliani told CBS's "Face the Nation" that beyond the McDougal-related recording, "there are 12 others, maybe 11 or 12 others out of the 183, in which the president is discussed at any length by Cohen, mostly with reporters."

Lanny Davis, an attorney and spokesman for Cohen, declined to comment.

Giuliani briefly described his view of some of those conversations, claiming that Cohen's statements on them "take it right out of the campaign contribution arsenal" and could protect the president from being scrutinized for campaign finance law violations. But he did not offer evidence to back up those assertions.

"These are tapes I want you to read, I want you to hear them. I didn't think I'd be able to get them out publicly," Giuliani said. "I can't do it. I mean, I'm not allowed to do it. We've not leaked a single tape."

Cohen is under federal investigation in New York for possible bank fraud, wire fraud and campaign finance violations. FBI agents in April raided Cohen's Manhattan office, home and hotel room as part of the investigation, seizing records about Cohen's clients and personal finances.

Giuliani also said negotiations have momentarily paused with Mueller over a potential voluntary interview with the president.

"We have an outstanding offer to them," Giuliani said, referencing a letter of suggested question areas that Trump's lawyers have sent to Mueller. "They haven't responded in about a week to 10 days. I don't hold that against them. I think they've got a lot going on like we do."

Giuliani declined to say "what the offer looks like except there is a sort of area of questioning and a group of restrictions on it that we could live with" on both Russian interference and the president's conduct during the investigation.

As the two sides head toward a confrontation over a presidential interview, White House lawyer Emmet Flood and other Trump attorneys are strategizing about how to handle a subpoena from Mueller that would seek to compel Trump to testify.

Several White House officials said Flood has cautioned Trump and others about the unpredictability of a subpoena fight that could be decided by the Supreme Court. Such a case would be unprecedented. Independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr served President Bill Clinton with a subpoena to

compel him to appear before a grand jury, but it was withdrawn after Clinton agreed to testify voluntarily.

Giuliani: Cohen Recorded 183 Conversations, Trump Is Mentioned In 12

By Pam Key

[Breitbart](#), July 29, 2018

Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation," former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, also an attorney for President Donald Trump, said the president's legal team was aware of 183 conversations that Michael Cohen recorded, and that of those 183, Trump was only mentioned in 12.

Partial transcript as follows:

MARGARET BRENNAN: —how much of the evidence that the FBI seized from Michael Cohen's— you know, place of work and residence relates to the president, beyond tapes?

GIULIANI: Well let me see if I can— I can make it about as clear as possible. We know of something like 183 unique conversations on tape. One of those is with the president of the United States. That's the three-minute one involving the McDougal payment— AMI-McDougal payment. There are 12 others, maybe 11 or 12 others out of the 183, in which the president is discussed at any length by Cohen, mostly with reporters. All clearly corroborating what the president has said in detail on many of those tweets. In other words, that he didn't know about the payments to either one when it happened; that he only found out later; that Cohen made them not for the campaign— he didn't— didn't like the campaign, he says very derogatory things about the campaign. Said 'I only made it because I personally love the president and Melania. And that's why I made the payments,' which takes it right out of the campaign contribution arsenal. So these— these are tapes I want you to read. I want you to hear them. I didn't think I'd be able to get them out publicly. And somehow, he and his lawyer have this crazy idea of just throw it all out there. I think they also don't realize it's going to hurt them with the prosecutors. When I was a prosecutor I don't want some guy giving out all the evidence to the press.

MARGARET BRENNAN: But you do want these tapes released now.

GIULIANI: I can't do it. I mean I'm not allowed to do it. We've not leaked a single tape. I think if you check with the reporters who did the stories they'd tell you that. The Times came forward and made that clear. We don't violate these rules. However, we are allowed to refer to them if they put them out. Why they're putting them out? Someday, somebody is going to have to figure it out. But, they're doing it.

MARGARET BRENNAN: You mentioned Karen McDougal this recording that was made public earlier this week relates to her she claims she did have a consensual affair with the president. But I want to ask you beyond this

case- beyond Stormy Daniels were other payments made to as yet unnamed women around the time of the 2016 campaign?

GIULIANI: There is there is a conversation about that. On one of the tapes in which I think Chris Cuomo asked him that. And Cohen says no. Denies it. Said that there were no other situations like this.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Was that an accurate statement by Cohen?

GIULIANI: As far as I know, yeah. I have no evidence to disprove that. And we've searched the records. I mean - remember both these payments were made or at least to the McDougal payment was going to made through a corporation. Well you're hardly going to make an illegal contribution through a corporation and that whole dispute about check or cash really couldn't have been done any other way. But-but by check. It's a corporation, after all, making the payment.

MARGARET BRENNAN: But, you maintain that payment didn't actually-occur.

GIULIANI: That one didn't happen for reasons I guess that AMI wanted to keep it, they probably saw a value in keeping it. I mean, I know a lot of people raised questions about it but it's pretty clear from the tape. This is a straight out and out legal and business transaction.

Giuliani: Cohen's Recording Of Trump Will Help The President

By Nikki Schwab

[New York Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani tried to make the case that Michael Cohen's secret recordings, including one of a discussion about paying off a Playboy Playmate, will eventually benefit the president.

"We've assured him in a very strange way that this is a good development for us because we do have all these tapes and these tapes completely demonstrate the president did nothing wrong," Giuliani argued on "Fox News Sunday."

Over on "Face the Nation" Giuliani told host Margaret Brennan, "These are tapes I want you to hear."

Last week, CNN aired one of these recordings, which featured a conversation between Trump and Cohen, the president's longtime lawyer and fixer, discussing paying to keep Playboy model Karen McDougal's tell-all about an alleged affair with Trump out of the National Enquirer, which had paid her for the story.

Trump is heard discussing the payment, but it's unclear if he advised Cohen to pay or not pay with "cash."

Giuliani pointed out that Trump planned to make the payment through a corporation.

"We were hardly going to be making an illegal contribution," he said.

He also said the payment to AMI, the National Enquirer's parent company, was never made.

"I guess AMI wanted to keep it, they probably saw value in keeping it," Giuliani said about the rights to McDougal's story.

"I know a lot of people raise questions about it, but it's pretty clear from the tape this is a straight out now legal and business transaction," Giuliani said.

On "Face the Nation" the Trump lawyer also laid out what he knew was on the Cohen tapes, explaining that there were 183 "unique conversations," which only included one featuring the president - the three-minute discussion of the AMI-McDougal payment.

Giuliani said there were about 12 others in which Trump was discussed, which were mostly conversations between Cohen and journalists.

In at least one, Giuliani claims, Cohen said he made the hush money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels as a personal favor to Trump.

"Not for the campaign, he didn't like the campaign, he says very derogatory things about the campaign. He said, 'I only made it because I personally love the president,'" Giuliani said. "Which takes it right out of the campaign contribution arsenal."

On "Fox News Sunday" Giuliani said the president is "disappointed" in Cohen, but added that his "anger is over."

However, Trump earlier Sunday had tweeted about Cohen, pointing to a complimentary comment

his former lawyer had made about Donald Trump Jr.

"So proud of @DonaldJTrumpJr for being open, honest and transparent to the American people. This nonsense needs to stop!" Cohen tweeted on July 11, 2017, the same day Donald Junior publicly released emails he had written a meeting in the Trump Tower with a Kremlin-connected lawyer.

"Do you think the Fake News Media will ever report on this tweet from Michael?" Trump wrote.

The president brought up Cohen's previous comments about the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting because Cohen last week said then-candidate Trump knew in advance about the sitdown with the lawyer who claimed she had dirt on Hillary Clinton.

Cohen also said he's willing to tell special counsel Robert Mueller about it.

"Every other participant in both those meetings say it is not true," Giuliani said Sunday of the meeting attended by former campaign associates Paul Manafort and Jared Kushner. "There was no such meeting in advance, there was no such interruption. It's not on tape."

Giuliani also walked back his previous comments when he called Cohen "an honest, honorable lawyer,"

"I found out that he was surreptitiously recording his clients, which is a disbarable offense," Giuliani said.

“Obviously if I knew that I wouldn’t have said he was a reputable lawyer. And scoundrel.”

Giuliani also raised how Cohen reportedly recorded a two-hour conversation with CNN anchor Chris Cuomo about a \$130,000 hush payment he made to former porn star Daniels in weeks before the 2016 election.

Cohen recorded the exchange in January after the Wall Street Journal reported details of the payoff.

“That makes him a total liar,” Giuliani said. “I didn’t know that. And now I’ve listened unfortunately – fortunately for my client’s point of view – to many, many hours of tape and the man is a pathological manipulator liar. I didn’t know that. I didn’t know him well. I knew nothing bad about Michael Cohen until all this started to happen in the last couple of weeks.”

Giuliani did back Cohen’s version of the truth when asked by Brennan if there were other hush money payments made to women in the run-up to the 2016 election.

Daniels lawyer, Michael Avenatti, recently made this claim.

Giuliani said that in the taped conversation between Cohen and CNN’s Cuomo, Cohen “denies it, says there were no other situations like this.”

“I have no evidence to disprove that. And we’ve searched the record,” Giuliani added.

On Sunday, Avenatti tweeted at Giuliani, challenging him on that fact.

“Are you denying that there were other hush payments made to as yet unnamed women in connection with the 2016 campaign? Asking for some friends ...” “>Avenatti wrote. “You better buckle up buttercup because Mr. Trump’s stupidity and disloyalty is about to catch up to him (and you).”

Rudy Giuliani Blasts Michael Cohen, Calls Former Trump Fixer A ‘Pathological Liar’

By David Jackson And Tom Vanden Brook

[USA Today](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump’s lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, lashed out Sunday at Michael Cohen, Trump’s former fixer, branding him a “pathological manipulator, liar.”

Cohen recorded conversations he had with Trump and others, and the recordings are now in the hands of federal investigators. Giuliani claimed Sunday the recordings contained no evidence that implicated the president in illegal activity.

“These tapes completely demonstrate the president did nothing wrong,” Giuliani said on “Fox News Sunday.”

Giuliani contended that Cohen is obviously out to hurt his former client.

Cohen is reportedly ready to tell prosecutors that then-candidate Trump knew all about son Donald Trump Jr.’s 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer.

According to Giuliani, Cohen said he was in a room with Trump, his son, and others in which the meeting with the lawyer — who Trump Jr. believed had dirt on Hillary Clinton — was discussed.

Per Giuliani, Trump and other participants in that alleged meeting claim it did not occur, and that Cohen has provided different dates for the discussion.

Further, Giuliani said the discussion is not on tape.

Sam Nunberg, a former Trump campaign aide, said Sunday on “Meet The Press” that he sided with the Trumps over Cohen.

“If you’re asking me who do I believe, the president or Michael Cohen, with what Michael Cohen may say – for instance when Michael Cohen says, now, that the president knew about the Russia meeting in advance – I would believe Don Jr. and the president, in light of learning that Michael was taping conversations, the way Michael was conducting himself behind the scenes and in front of all of us,” Nunberg said.

Still, Nunberg noted that Trump would have known about the Russia lawyer meeting “under normal circumstances.”

One Cohen tape that has surfaced reflects him and Trump in a 2016 discussion that appears to concern a woman who claimed to have had an affair with Trump.

Giuliani told Fox he has hired technicians to determine if someone tampered with the tape, which cuts off abruptly. He again said the tape does not show Trump breaking the law.

That tape is also the only one Cohen has with Trump himself on it. Giuliani said there are about 11 or 12 other Cohen tapes in which others discuss the president and members of his family.

Giuliani also confirmed that Trump and Cohen have formally severed legal ties.

Giuliani’s and Trump’s opinions of Cohen have evolved in recent months, as the former fixer has been dragged into the public eye over his work for Trump. As recently as May, Giuliani called Cohen “an honest, honorable lawyer.”

Now, he’s a “liar.”

The difference, Giuliani said Sunday, is that he has since learned that Cohen secretly taped clients, including Trump.

Calling it a “dis-barrable offense,” Giuliani told CBS’ “Face The Nation” that “I did not know that he taped conversations surreptitiously.”

Trump himself jumped on the anti-Cohen bandwagon Sunday, as he retweeted a former Cohen defense of Donald Trump, Jr., regarding the Russia meeting.

“So proud of @DonaldJTrumpJr for being open, honest and transparent to the American people,” Cohen had tweeted in July of 2017. “This nonsense needs to stop!”

Cohen's lawyer, Lanny Davis, said his client is telling the truth about Trump, and wants to get his story out.

Also on Sunday, Giuliani also said he is still in talks with special counsel Robert Mueller about possible testimony from Trump.

"We have an outstanding offer to them," Giuliani said.

The two sides have been negotiating all year, even after Trump changed legal teams and Mueller pursued indictments of Russian officials accused to seeking to interfere in the 2016 elections.

Mueller, who has led the Justice Department's probe into Russian meddling, is also looking into any links between the Russians and the Trump presidential campaign. The probe is also scrutinizing whether Trump sought to obstruct justice by firing FBI director James Comey in 2017 and otherwise undermining other Justice Department officials.

At one time, Giuliani said he hoped to make a final decision on whether or not Trump testifies by July 4.

On Sunday, Giuliani told CBS that talks since have been interrupted by other issues, including the Cohen matter and Mueller's prosecution of former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort. His trial is scheduled to begin this week.

The parties have been "distracted by all kinds of things," Giuliani said.

Rudy Giuliani: 'Somebody Played With' Recording Of Trump And Michael Cohen

By Daniel Chaitin

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

Rudy Giuliani, a member of President Trump's legal team, said Saturday that "somebody played with" the recording between Trump and his longtime personal attorney Michael Cohen that was shared last week with CNN.

"He abruptly ended that recording as soon as the president said the word 'check,'" Giuliani told Fox News. "What we are investigating is, how did that happen? What actually did happen? What was eliminated? And then you have to raise these questions with every one of these tapes. How many of them did he play around with?"

The audio tape was made in September 2016 and was provided to CNN by Cohen's attorney, Lanny Davis. On it, Cohen and Trump can be heard discussing how they would buy the rights to Playboy model Karen McDougal's story about an alleged affair.

Giuliani claimed that both Davis, who served as an adviser to former President Bill Clinton, and Cohen are "deceivers," adding in tweets Saturday evening that Davis is "destroying" Cohen's credibility and usefulness as a witness because of his willingness to "leak" his client's "surreptitiously record[ed] tapes."

Giuliani has accused Cohen of violating the attorney-client privilege he had with Trump over discussion about the tape, while Davis shot back that Giuliani "waived" that privilege by talking about the recording.

The latest offensive by Giuliani came after CNN reported late Thursday that Cohen is ready to tell special counsel Robert Mueller that Trump knew in advance that son Donald Trump Jr. and campaign officials were planning to meet with Russians in hopes of obtaining dirt on Hillary Clinton, despite Trump's claims he knew nothing about the June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower in Manhattan.

Trump Points To Michael Cohen Tweet Praising Don Jr. Following Trump Tower Revelations

By Chuck Ross

[Daily Caller](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump called attention Sunday to an old tweet from Michael Cohen to cast doubt on his former attorney's allegations about the now-infamous June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower between Donald Trump Jr. and a group of Russians who promised dirt on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

"Do you think the Fake News Media will ever report on this tweet from Michael?" Trump tweeted, linking to a July 11, 2017 tweet from Cohen.

In the tweet, Cohen praised Trump Jr. "for being open, honest and transparent to the American people" about the Trump Tower meeting.

Days earlier, The New York Times broke the story that Trump Jr., his brother-in-law Jared Kushner, and Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort met on June 9, 2016 with a group of Russians promising derogatory information on Clinton.

Trump Jr. released his emails scheduling the meeting on the morning of Cohen's tweet. Cohen sent the tweet just after Trump Jr. told Fox News' Sean Hannity that he did not tell his father about the Trump Tower meeting.

Cohen is now reportedly singing a different tune about the Trump Tower tryst.

The longtime Trump fixer is willing to tell the special counsel's office that he took part in a meeting in which Trump approved of his son hosting the Russian delegation, CNN reported Thursday.

Trump Jr. accepted the meeting after an acquaintance named Rob Goldstone emailed him to say that a Russian government attorney wanted to meet with the campaign to provide information on Hillary Clinton.

"If it is what you say I love it," Trump Jr. replied.

Goldstone and the Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, showed up to the meeting with three other Russians. All of the participants have described the meeting

as a waste of time, saying that Veselnitskaya offered nothing of substance about Clinton. Instead, she wanted to discuss the Magnitsky Act, a 2012 law that sanctions Russian human rights abusers.

The meeting attendees have all said that no follow up meetings took place.

The possibility that Trump and Trump Jr. have lied about Trump approving the meeting has reignited the debate over whether the Trump Tower conclave is evidence of a collusion conspiracy. Cohen's claims could also cause legal problems for the Trumps. Trump Jr. told the Senate Judiciary Committee in September that he did not tell his father about the meeting before it occurred. Trump's denials could also potentially be used against him in the special counsel's investigation into possible obstruction of justice on Trump's part.

Despite Trump's suggestion that the Cohen tweet got no media coverage, The Daily Caller News Foundation did report about it, and CNN referred to it during a segment on Friday.

Nunes: Americans Will Be 'Shocked' By Other Carter Page FISA Info

By Chuck Ross

[Daily Caller](#), July 29, 2018

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes claimed Sunday that the American public will be "shocked" when it sees the remaining blacked out portions of the FBI's applications for spy warrants against former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

"We are quite confident that once the American people see these 20 pages, at least for those that will get real reporting on this issue, they will be shocked by what's in that FISA application," Nunes said in an interview with Fox News' Maria Bartiromo.

Nunes' comments raise expectations about what information remains hidden behind 20-plus pages of the FBI's fourth and final application for a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrant against Page.

The Department of Justice released portions of the four FISA applications on July 20 in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit. A majority of the information remains redacted because it is classified.

Nunes and his fellow Republicans on the Intelligence Committee asked President Donald Trump in a June 14 letter to declassify 21 pages from the final FISA application, which was signed by deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.

The unredacted portions of the applications confirmed much of what has already been made public through two memos released earlier this year by Republicans and Democrats on the House Intelligence panel.

The applications show that the FBI relied heavily on the unverified Steele dossier to make the case that Page was acting as a foreign agent of Russia during the presidential campaign. Page has vehemently denied the allegations.

The release of the FISA applications reignited debate over whether the FBI abused the FISA process by relying on the dossier to obtain the warrants.

Democrats argued that the applications showed that the FBI provided enough evidence to show FISA Court judges that there was probable cause to believe that Page was acting as a covert agent of Russia. They also asserted that the information hidden behind the remaining redactions likely provided other damning evidence against Page, including evidence that would bolster the Democrat-funded dossier.

But Nunes, a Trump ally, is suggesting that is not the case.

"What's left that's redacted, the American people really do need to know what's underneath there."

He also insisted on Sunday that "the Left and the media" do not want additional portions of the FISAs to be made public.

"They don't want that unredacted. They don't want transparency for the American people," he said.

Nunes said that he believes that the president's lawyers are reviewing the June 14 letter to see if the 20 pages can be made public.

In an unprecedented move, the Department of Justice has released 412 pages of top-secret documents related to surveillance conducted against former Trump campaign chairman Carter Page.

The documents include an October 2016 application and three renewal applications for Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants taken out against Page.

The New York Times and other news outlets obtained the applications through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

The application also says that the FBI had probable cause to believe that Page engaged in "clandestine intelligence activities"; and is an agent of a foreign power.

Republican and Democrats on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence previously released highlights from the documents. A memo released by Committee Chairman Devin Nunes has revealed that the Justice Department and FBI relied heavily on the Democrat-funded Steele dossier in the FISA applications.

The dossier is the first piece of evidence cited in the FISA application section laying out the allegations that Page coordinated with Russian government officials on election-related "influence activities";

That section cites information from "Source #1"; who alleged that during a trip to Moscow in July 2016, Page met secretly with two sanctioned Kremlin

insiders, Igor Sechin and Igor Diveykin, as part of a collusion scheme involving the Trump campaign.

The source appears to be Christopher Steele, the former British spy who wrote the dossier.

Steele also alleged in the dossier that Page worked with Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort to exchange information with Russian operatives. Page has vehemently denied the dossier's allegations, and says he has never spoken to Manafort. He also says he has never met Sechin and Diveykin while denying that he is a Russian agent.

Nunes: DOJ, FBI Stalling Turning Documents Over With Hope GOP Will Lose The House In Midterms

By Pam Key

[Breitbart](#), July 29, 2018

On this week's broadcast of Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures," House Intelligence Committee chairman Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA) said the Department of Justice was stalling turning over documents to Congress with the hopes that the Democrats win the majority in the House of Representatives and shut down the investigations.

Nunes said, "I've seen this game played many times before. There is a stall game going on at DOJ and FBI. They are trying to stall as much as they can, hoping and betting that Republicans would lose the House in the fall. If that happens, it essentially shuts down everything. Rod Rosenstein wouldn't be held for contempt. FBI will not be held accountable. All of the investigations will be shut down, everything will be buried, and you will be left with media narratives saying 'Oh, what the public can't read, what's blackout is what's really bad stuff against Carter Page and the Republicans and the Trump campaign.' That's why the sooner the president declassifies, the better. The American people need to understand how important it will be to get out and vote in the election."

On the efforts to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, Nunes said, "What I can tell you is there was a move late last week to begin impeachment. I think there are grounds for impeachment and we should hold them accountable. Congress has given them way too much power."

Jim Jordan: 'We Will Actually Call The Vote For The Impeachment Of Rod Rosenstein'

By Naomi Lim

[Washington Examiner](#), July 29, 2018

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, on Sunday stood by his efforts to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, despite criticism from top lawmakers including House

Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and commentators like famed legal professor Alan Dershowitz.

"If they don't give us the documents, if they don't give us information that we as a separate and equal branch of government are entitled to have in order to get answers for the American people, then we will actually call the vote for the impeachment of Rod Rosenstein," Jordan said during an interview with John Catsimatidis on "The Cats Roundtable" that aired Sunday on New York radio station AM 970.

Jordan and his House Freedom Caucus colleague Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., announced on Wednesday that they had filed a resolution with nine other members of Congress to impeach Rosenstein, claiming the Justice Department's No. 2 had hindered congressional oversight of special counsel Robert Mueller's federal Russia investigation.

Ryan said he opposes impeaching Rosenstein, but Meadows has threatened to go around the speaker if the GOP leader won't allow a floor vote on the resolution. However, any action on impeachment will have to wait as House lawmakers are on August recess.

A group of high-profile House Republicans have clashed with Justice Department and FBI officials in recent months as they pursue documents covering the Russia probe — including the FBI's use of informants to make contact with the 2016 Trump campaign and speculation it had abused Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act powers to gather information on Trump associates — and its examination of Hillary Clinton's private email server.

Tensions culminated with House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, R-Calif., demanding the DOJ and the FBI provide the materials or be subject to "obstruction." The House then passed a resolution demanding the agencies hand over sensitive documents sought by Nunes, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., and House Oversight Committee Chairman Trey Gowdy, R-S.C.

Jordan, who on Thursday officially launched his bid to replace Ryan as House speaker, said that a Republican-controlled House under his leadership would make a more concerted effort to keep campaign promises made by GOP candidates in the lead-up to the 2018 midterm elections.

"President Trump is doing what he said," Jordan continued. "We need to do more of that in Congress, and that's why I want to be speaker."

Trump Is Right About Clearances

Preferential treatment for former officials doesn't improve national security. It creates a caste system.

By Sean Bigley

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Reporter Carl Bernstein Has Seen It All, From Nixon To Now. But Nothing Quite Like Trump.

By Margaret Sullivan

[Washington Post](#), July 27, 2018

On July 27, 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted to adopt the first of three articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon, charging he had personally tried to obstruct justice in the Watergate case.

Nixon would resign in disgrace less than two weeks later.

As every history buff and journalism nerd knows, that very likely would not have happened without the dogged investigative reporting of a couple of young Washington Post reporters: Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

There is no more famous double byline in the history of the American press.

So it was both fitting and slightly surreal — precisely 44 years later — to see Bernstein on cable news, talking about a story that had been published the previous day, one that also carried his name.

The tripled-bylined CNN story said that President Trump, according to his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, knew about the infamous July 2016 meeting in Trump Tower between Russian representatives and Trump's associates, including his son, Donald Trump Jr.

If there is a single through-line from the doomed Nixon presidency to the troubled Trump presidency, it may be Carl Bernstein.

I caught up with Bernstein, an author and CNN analyst, Friday as he was bouncing between personal obligations and TV appearances, his phone exploding with calls and texts.

He described Trump as “sui generis” — one of a kind — not only in his “habitual aversion to telling the truth” and his “willingness to embrace authoritarian and racist notions,” but also in his “considerable brilliance in figuring out and tapping into something in the country” that was forming before his arrival as a candidate.

As for the Cohen news itself, Bernstein says the nub of it “goes to the question of intent to collude.”

But, as he said on CNN shortly after the story broke, there remain some big “ifs.”

Cohen, he noted, is “shopping for a get-out-of-jail card” through his cooperation with special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s investigation of Trump.

“If this information is true and accurate,” he said of Trump’s purported foreknowledge, and “if it can be nailed down” in testimony, it may be a very big deal, he said. (Trump and his son have consistently denied that the then-candidate knew about the meeting, which reportedly was convened to give the campaign dirt on Hillary Clinton.)

Earlier this month, Bernstein said on CNN that he had never seen anything like the political reaction to Trump’s

kowtowing to Russian President Vladimir Putin at a news conference following their Helsinki meeting: “We’ve never had a moment in our history like this where serious people of both parties are questioning the loyalty of the president of the United States. Unprecedented.”

Unprecedented is a pretty good description of Bernstein’s longevity as a reporter on stories like this. (Woodward also has had a long, fruitful reporting career, with much of his emphasis in recent years on writing political books that often break news.)

“It’s glorious and poignant that this veteran investigative reporter, who will forever be identified with Watergate, is wading back into the fray,” said Tim O’Brien, the Trump biographer and executive editor of Bloomberg View.

But not surprising, O’Brien told me, recalling his encounter with Bernstein last summer after an appearance together on Anderson Cooper’s CNN show, “AC360.”

“Carl made a point of giving me his cellphone number and saying he wanted to get together for coffee soon because he needed to learn everything he could” about Trump and his finances.

Bernstein, said O’Brien, “is not a careerist — he’s a gigantic firehouse of boyish enthusiasm” and reportorial curiosity.

Not to mention pure longevity.

“It’s almost as if someone reporting on Watergate in the 1970s had also reported on the Teapot Dome scandal of the 1920s,” the journalist and author James Fallows told me.

But making it even more eerie — his word — is the “thematic consonance” of the two situations: both dramas of presidential legitimacy, both asking, “What did the president know, and when did he know it?”

“I can’t think of any parallel in our journalistic history,” Fallows said, though he mentioned that there are some reporters who manage to stay in the game, probably by dint of their inherent doggedness, including Walter Pincus, formerly of The Post, and the late David Halberstam of the New York Times.

How important will the latest Cohen story be in the overall arc of the Trump presidency? It’s too early to know.

But it could turn out to be a milestone. As Charles Pierce noted in Esquire on Friday, with a reference to a key White House lawyer of the Nixon era:

“This is the yes-or-no moment. If CNN is right, and if Cohen is telling the truth, then, in the immortal words of J. Fred Buzhardt, that’s the ballgame. Or ought to be.”

That Carl Bernstein, at 74, would once again be right in the middle of the high drama is utterly weird — and utterly perfect.

Bush Claimed Power To Override A Torture Ban. What Did Brett Kavanaugh Think About That?

By Charlie Savage

[New York Times](#), July 29, 2018

When Brett M. Kavanaugh came before the Judiciary Committee in May 2006 for his nomination to be an appeals court judge, senators pressed him on his role in President George W. Bush's use of signing statements to claim the power to bypass new laws — like a much-disputed assertion the previous December that he could override a ban on torture.

Judge Kavanaugh, who at the time was the White House staff secretary, acknowledged handling draft signing statements to ensure that “relevant members of the administration have provided input” before presenting them to Mr. Bush. But the nominee sidestepped questions about any advice or views he had about them, refusing to discuss “internal matters” and pivoting instead to a description of a 1952 Supreme Court opinion that explains how to analyze separation-of-powers disputes in general.

Now that President Trump has nominated Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, the opacity of his testimony about Mr. Bush's signing statements, including about the torture ban, is becoming a case study for Democrats' vehement arguments that the Senate must see his staff secretary files before any confirmation hearing. Democrats have already been raising concerns that Judge Kavanaugh may hold too expansive a view of executive power in other contexts, like his skepticism about the wisdom of forcing a president to answer questions in criminal investigations.

“Judge Kavanaugh played a key role in clearing President Bush's use of signing statements,” said Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader. “Understanding the nature of his involvement in those actions is absolutely critical to evaluating the type of justice he would be on the bench. The Senate and the American people deserve full access to the documents from his time as staff secretary.”

A White House spokesman declined to comment on whether the staff secretary files contained anything Judge Kavanaugh had written about signing statements on the torture ban or any other legislation.

But, either way, Senate Republicans are pushing to move forward on the nomination without asking the National Archives to provide those documents. They argue that a staff secretary's role is to handle the flow of paper into and out of the Oval Office, not to render substantive advice, so it is not necessary to see what he wrote in that position.

“These documents are both the least relevant to Judge Kavanaugh's legal thinking and the most sensitive to the

executive branch,” Senator Charles E. Grassley, the Iowa Republican who is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said in a July 24 speech on the Senate floor.

Still, two White House staff secretaries from the Obama administration, Lisa Brown and Rajesh De, said that it was misleading to portray the staff secretary as a mere traffic cop or inbox and outbox for other officials' writings.

Typically, they said, before sending documents into the Oval Office, the staff secretary canvasses senior administration officials to give them a chance to object to a draft's analysis or recommendations. Especially if there is a disagreement, they said, a staff secretary often writes a cover memo to the president explaining the issue.

“The staff secretary role is potentially very influential, depending upon how he is utilized by the president,” said Mr. De, who now leads the national security practice at the law firm Mayer Brown. “This is the last person to review, comment on, or adjudicate differences with respect to material sent to the president, and may need to synthesize or explain differing points of view on issues of significance.”

Mr. Bush's aggressive use of presidential signing statements became a contentious issue toward the end of Judge Kavanaugh's tenure as staff secretary from 2003 to 2006. By then, Mr. Bush had already challenged more provisions of new laws than all previous presidents combined, but those claims attracted little attention until he asserted that he could bypass a December 2005 law in which Congress, over his objections, had tightened restrictions against torture.

Emails disclosed last year during the confirmation of Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, another Bush administration veteran, revealed that there had been a high-level internal fight about what the signing statement on the torture ban should say. But those emails did not show how Judge Kavanaugh eventually presented the matter to Mr. Bush.

Pressed at his 2006 hearing to express an opinion about whether the president could legally override the torture ban, Judge Kavanaugh gave an ambiguous answer. He said the president must “follow the Constitution and the laws passed by the Congress” — without saying whether he thought, in that instance, the statute conflicted with the Constitution.

Mr. Grassley has said he does want to see Judge Kavanaugh's papers from his time as an associate White House counsel from 2001 to 2003; it is not clear whether any of those address signing statements. Republicans also point out that the Senate has access to years of his judicial opinions, published writings, speeches, and other such materials.

Since he became a judge, his writings show, he has spoken more extensively about two major issues raised by Mr. Bush's use of signing statements.

The first is the legitimacy of a sweeping theory of executive power that Mr. Bush's legal team often advanced:

that the president, as commander in chief, can override statutes in which Congress has regulated the executive branch's conduct in national security matters.

In a favorable review last year of a book written by another judge, David J. Barron, Judge Kavanaugh said "it seems settled" that Congress cannot interfere with presidents' power "to supervise, direct and remove subordinate officers in the national security realm" and "to direct specific troop movements."

But beyond those issues, he wrote, Judge Barron "advances a forceful originalist and historical-practice case that presidents must and do comply with congressional regulation of wartime activities such as surveillance, detention, interrogation and the use of military commissions."

Still, Judge Kavanaugh pointed out a catch: It is often "not easy" to tell whether an action should be analyzed as defying a law, because presidents often argue that statutes should be interpreted as blessing their policies. (Indeed, during the Bush administration's internal debate over the December 2005 signing statement on the torture ban, some officials had argued for declaring that the new law was best read as essentially codifying their existing interrogation policies, rather than suggesting any plans to defy Congress. Earlier that year, the Justice Department had secretly concluded, in a memo that was later rescinded, that interrogation tactics like waterboarding and sleep deprivation did not violate the humane-treatment standard that Congress had included in the new law.)

And even when a president unambiguously defies a law, he noted, sometimes that is legal. He cited a 2015 ruling in which the Supreme Court upheld presidents' constitutional authority to disregard a statute about passports and Israel.

Judge Kavanaugh has also addressed the other big issue raised in the signing statements debate: whether it is legitimate for presidents to sign bills but effectively nullify some provisions by deeming them unconstitutional, or whether the Constitution gives presidents only the choice of signing a bill — and then obeying all of it — or vetoing it.

In 2006, the American Bar Association took the latter view, arguing that signing statements were "contrary to the rule of law and our constitutional system of separation of powers." But former executive branch lawyers of both parties have rejected that position as going too far.

In a 2015 lecture to law students, Judge Kavanaugh made clear that he shared the view that presidents may decline to obey statutes if they have a "reasonable" constitutional objection — unless a court issues a final order telling them otherwise.

That said, he warned, "It's about the most controversial thing a president can do." His advice to executive branch officials considering making such a claim was "you'd better know what you're doing legally, you'd better have a thick skin

politically, and you'd better hope you don't have a Senate confirmation process in the near future."

Review Kavanaugh's Documents As Needed. Then Proceed.

By Editorial Board

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

IF THE early going is any indication, every stage of the Senate's consideration of Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh to replace retiring Justice Anthony M. Kennedy on the Supreme Court is going to be a partisan battle. At this point in his confirmation process, Mr. Kavanaugh should be meeting widely with the senators who will approve or reject his nomination. But even that is on hold as lawmakers fight about how many papers from Mr. Kavanaugh's past they should review.

Democrats argue that the whole universe of papers from the judge's past — including his work as staff secretary to President George W. Bush — should be fair game. This could total 1 million or more pages, a document dump that could delay Mr. Kavanaugh's confirmation. Republicans insist that vast swaths of that record would be totally irrelevant to his judicial qualifications. In fact, much of it would be — but that does not mean there should not be a thorough and searching analysis of that part of Mr. Kavanaugh's past work that is germane.

Democrats argue that senators should make the same demands of Mr. Kavanaugh as they did of Justice Elena Kagan during her confirmation proceedings. Ms. Kagan served President Bill Clinton before joining the federal bench; senators received records from her White House tenure. Republicans counter that Mr. Kavanaugh's work as staff secretary was not comparable; his job was more about keeping documents flowing in the right directions at the right times, not offering substantive contributions to the policy questions crossing his desk.

Mr. Kavanaugh himself has said his time as staff secretary prepared him for judging. Moreover, he may have participated in weighing some extremely hot-button issues the Bush White House considered — torture, enemy combatants, signing statements and so forth. The Senate should consider any substantive contributions he made on these and other issues, both to gauge his temperament and to determine whether he would have to recuse himself in big cases.

Doing so may not require that senators review literally every document that touched Mr. Kavanaugh's hands. Rather, Democrats and Republicans should agree on a way to streamline the process. Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Tex.) suggested last week that "documents that were merely distributed among the executive branch by Mr. Kavanaugh when he was staff secretary, but which he didn't have any role in authoring or writing or contributing to, those

would bear no relevance at all to his qualifications to serve as judge.” But, he added, materials he generated or contributed to are a different story.

Mr. Cornyn’s words suggest that there should be an acceptable compromise between a massive document dump and no disclosure at all of Mr. Kavanaugh’s staff secretary papers. A targeted dump — perhaps overseen by archivists at the George W. Bush presidential library, a nonpartisan review committee or another credible body with the ability to conduct electronic keyword searches — would fit the bill. Senators should find a way to satisfy legitimate interest in what Mr. Kavanaugh’s past work suggests about his views and temperament, then let the process proceed.

Calling Judge Kavanaugh

The Fifth Circuit tees up a major separation of powers case.

By The Editorial Board, Wall Street Journal
[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

How John Kelly Became ‘Chief In Name Only’

The retired Marine general was brought in to tame the president, but in the end Trump boxed him in.

By Eliana Johnson
[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

John Kelly got the official news of his promotion a year ago the same way a select few in the Trump administration have — by presidential tweet.

Kelly, then the secretary of homeland security, had talked with the president about coming on board as White House chief of staff, but the two had yet to discuss the timing of an announcement or an official rollout when Trump tweeted from aboard Air Force One: “I am pleased to inform you that I have just named General/Secretary John F Kelly as White House Chief of Staff. He is a Great American”

The announcement’s unexpected timing and the unorthodox forum may have represented a feature of the Trump presidency that Kelly sought to normalize when he took the job, but those hopes have not materialized. (A White House spokeswoman said that at the time of Trump’s tweet, Kelly had received a formal job offer and “was aware his promotion would be announced in the coming days.”)

A year into the job, Kelly’s attempts to implement traditional processes in an untraditional White House have failed, according to a dozen people in and outside the administration — though virtually all concede the West Wing runs better than it used to.

Kelly’s allies say he took the job out of a sense of duty, and he has suggested he doesn’t enjoy it much. “It is not the best job I ever had,” he told reporters in October. Increasingly, the sober-minded Marine seems to be in on the

joke about the relative futility of his labors: “I’m leaving and I’m not coming back,” he has told his aides, only to show up for work the following day. Early mornings in the office have been supplanted by sweat sessions at the gym.

Many of Trump’s friends and advisers have concluded the president doesn’t really want a chief of staff — and he has several confidants urging him to operate without one. But for this president, keeping Kelly around offers the best of both worlds: somebody to blame when things go awry but nobody fettering his freedom of action.

Kelly, people around him say, no longer works to keep his mercurial boss on task or on message, with a Republican close to the White House referring to him as a “chief of staff in name only.”

“The president knows that it is necessary to have a chief of staff that allows him to do things that only he, as president, can do,” said White House deputy press secretary Lindsay Walters.

But nearly all the traces of the martial regime Kelly initially sought to impose have vanished. His efforts to centralize lines of reporting — he made a point of asking Trump’s own daughter Ivanka to report to him — have gone by the wayside.

“The president, probably because of his business background, seems to prefer a flatter organization for his White House staff than do most presidents. That’s his prerogative, of course, and Gen. Kelly has effectively managed to it,” said Sen. Tom Cotton (R.-Ark.), a Trump and Kelly confidant who recommended Kelly to senior members of the Trump transition in 2016.

With the president working around his own chief, keeping Trump on task has proved a challenge. Trump now adds to his daily schedule in a black appointment book, jotting down meetings he schedules the day of with the help of his personal aide, Madeline Westerhout. A White House spokeswoman said Westerhout coordinates those meetings with the chief of staff’s office.

Kelly has done away with “meeting crashers,” the West Wing aides who showed up for meetings uninvited, according to a White House aide, but he has not been able to curb Trump’s practice of adding and subtracting advisers to meetings throughout the day or of turning scheduled gatherings into freewheeling discussions of subjects that suit his interests — including those suggested to him by his coterie of outside advisers, including Fox News host Sean Hannity.

“He comes down for the day, and whatever he saw on ‘Fox and Friends,’ he schedules meetings based on that,” said one former White House official. “If it’s Iran, it’s ‘Get John Bolton down here!’ ... If he’s seen something on TV or [was] talking to Hannity the night before, he’s got lots of flexibility to do whatever he wants to do.”

Chafing at the controls Kelly attempted to implement, an increasingly confident president has settled into a management style that most closely resembles that of an inauspicious predecessor: Gerald Ford. The 38th president, who communicated directly with nearly a dozen senior advisers, described it as “the spokes of the wheel” — with the president sitting at the center, an approach left discredited by Ford’s tenure.

“Every president learns you cannot govern without an empowered chief of staff to execute your agenda,” says Chris Whipple, author of “The Gatekeepers,” a history of modern chiefs of staff. “If Donald Trump wants to be Jimmy Carter, if he wants to be a one-term president, he should try to govern without a chief of staff.”

Kelly is the first retired general to hold the chief of staff position since Alexander Haig during the Ford administration. Whipple recounts Haig grousing, according to Ford’s personal aide, that thanks to Ford’s chaotic management of the West Wing, “We have no record of what was discussed or decided or anything else. We can’t run the White House this way!” (Ford was known to make decisions after consulting privately with his personal photographer, just as Trump frequently pulls the trigger after consulting with Hannity or his business associates.)

Like the easygoing Ford and the straight-laced Haig, Trump and Kelly have had a rocky relationship from the moment Kelly moved to the West Wing.

As secretary of homeland security, Kelly gained Trump’s respect as a true believer in the president’s immigration agenda and for his no-nonsense approach to policing the southern U.S. border. “If lawmakers do not like the laws they’ve passed and we are charged to enforce — then they should have the courage and skill to change the laws,” he said in a speech at George Washington University in April 2017. “Otherwise they should shut up and support the men and women on the front lines.”

Arriving in the West Wing last year, Kelly did everything he could to distinguish his tenure from that of his predecessor, Reince Priebus. He revoked White House badges from campaign aides who were never brought into the administration; pushed out Trump loyalists, from chief strategist Steve Bannon to “Apprentice” star Omarosa Manigault, who were blamed for dissension and infighting; and imposed a policy-making apparatus intended to control the flow of information that reached the president.

He also worked to prevent the president from summoning aides into the Oval Office on a whim and urged the president to place his phone calls through the White House switchboard. But while Trump and many of his aides chafed at the new order, three White House officials said these practices didn’t last longer than six weeks.

With closer contact, Trump and Kelly have proven increasingly incompatible. The president makes decisions in

part based on the blurts emitted from a media world of his own creation, his television tuned to Fox News and his cellphone at the ready to dial up any number of its on-air talent. Kelly, by contrast, rarely watches television and doesn’t follow Twitter, the forum on which the president announces many of his decisions.

“Believe it or not, I do not follow the tweets,” Kelly said in November. “I find out about them.”

At critical times, White House aides say, this inattention to traditional and social media has created blind spots for Kelly in an administration where the boss’ actions are often shaped by news coverage. His lowest moment came in February in the days following former White House staff secretary Rob Porter’s resignation amid multiple allegations of past spousal abuse.

Kelly himself was the subject of a rash of negative news stories after he issued a statement of support for Porter. White House aides were perplexed that he did not appear aware of the coverage — or of how bad it had become.

Though he does not enjoy the first-among-equals status afforded many of the chiefs of staff who preceded him, Kelly remains an influential voice on national security issues. The president weighs his advice alongside that of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, national security adviser Bolton and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, and he has been particularly vocal in pushing back against the president’s impulsive demands to withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula and elsewhere around the globe.

On other issues, however, Trump, a president who has elevated more military leaders into key political positions than any of his modern predecessors and praised them in the highest terms — “my generals” from “central casting” — has also has pooh-poohed their advice. “They have blinders on,” the president has said, arguing that they “don’t understand anything except for military tactics” and “they’re not businessmen,” according to a Republican close to the White House.

That helps to explain not so much why Kelly’s influence has waned, but rather why he never had the impact so many people in and outside the White House had hoped for in the first place.

Reports of Kelly’s diminishing influence and of his ultimate demise have ebbed and flowed. But White House officials are nearly unanimous in their agreement that Kelly is an improvement over what came before. “He improved a bad situation so it looked like he was making advances and now, it’s not so much that he has lost any kind of standing, it’s that the whole operation is run more smoothly and so there’s less need for what he was doing,” said a senior administration official.

On Capitol Hill, Republicans also say matters have improved, and Kelly remains a reassuring presence to lawmakers. “I believe every day he puts out fires, sometimes

from the staff, sometimes from Cabinet members, and sometimes in the Oval Office itself,” said Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio). “But he does it quietly.”

Officials Say Fast Growth To Continue, Trump Respects Fed

By Marcy Gordon

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

President Donald Trump’s top economic policymakers insisted Sunday that the robust growth marked in the April-June quarter will maintain its pace and that he respects the Federal Reserve’s independence despite his condemnation of the central bank for raising interest rates.

“We as an administration absolutely support the independence of the Fed, and the president has made it clear that this is the Fed’s decision,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told “Fox News Sunday.” He said Trump’s critical statements “are really more just comments saying as interest rates are going up, it’s something that the president has a concern” about.

The Fed isn’t expected to announce a rate increase when its latest policy meeting ends Wednesday. But the central bank is widely anticipated to set the stage for tightening credit again in September for a third time this year and then to likely raise rates again by December. The Fed has raised rates twice this year in response to strong growth, low unemployment and a slight rise in inflation.

Trump has taken credit for that growth, and 10 days ago he criticized the recent rate increases, warning that they could slow the economy’s advance. Criticism of interest rate hikes by the Fed, which is politically independent from the White House and administration, is something no president has expressed publicly in more than two decades.

“I don’t like all of this work we are putting into the economy, and then I see rates going up,” Trump said in an interview with CNBC.

The rate increases are intended to prevent the economy from overheating or inflation from accelerating too sharply. But higher rates make borrowing for homes, autos and credit cards more expensive — an unpopular consequence for consumers.

“The market expects interest rates to keep going up,” Mnuchin said. “So the only question is how far and for how long? And we think the Fed will be very careful in managing the economy.”

The latest snapshot of the economy issued by the government Friday showed an energetic 4.1 percent annual growth rate in the second quarter, the fastest pace in nearly four years.

Trump and administration officials have declared that the gains are sustainable and will only accelerate. But few economists outside the administration agree with that

assessment. And there is concern that the trade battles pursued by Trump could endanger economic growth over time.

The administration has imposed billions of dollars in tariffs on Chinese and Canadian products, and threatened billions more on U.S. allies in Europe. Tariffs, which are taxes on imports, are meant to protect domestic companies against foreign competitors — but also can hurt U.S. businesses and consumers that pay more for imported products.

Downplaying the concerns, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said Sunday the basic drivers of economic performance — not temporary factors like the surge in farm exports ahead of anticipated new tariffs — will continue to boost growth going forward.

“The basics of this (second-quarter) number were consumer spending and business investment,” Kudlow said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.” “Consumer spending, business investment are on a tear.”

Mnuchin predicted the economy will enjoy four or five years of sustained 3 percent growth “at least.”

“I don’t think this is a one- or two-year phenomenon,” he said.

Kudlow told CNN’s “State of the Union”: “I think the president deserves a victory lap — low tax rates, rolling back regulations, opening up energy, for example. ... The fundamentals of the economy look really good.”

Pointing to “five Trump quarters” of strong growth, Kudlow said, “I don’t see any reason why we can’t run this for several quarters.”

Many experts believe it’s unlikely that growth can continue at the 4.1 percent pace. Some of the factors in the second quarter appeared to be one-offs. Soybean exports jumped as farmers sought to beat the impending tariffs overseas. And business spending was boosted by soaring investment in oil and gas drilling equipment, which might not last.

Other challenges loom. Borrowing costs are rising, lifted by the Fed’s interest rate increases. And rising prices have left average hourly pay, after adjusted for inflation, flat over the past 12 months.

Still, other trends do appear sustainable and could help boost growth above the roughly 2 percent annual pace that’s prevailed since the 2008-09 financial crisis and Great Recession ended.

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Mnuchin: Trump ‘Absolutely Respects’ Fed’s Independence

By David Beavers

[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin insisted on Sunday that President Donald Trump and his administration “absolutely support” the Federal Reserve’s independence.

“We as an administration absolutely support the independence of the Fed, and the president’s made it clear that this is the Fed’s decision,” Mnuchin said on “Fox News Sunday.”

Responding to recent comments by the president questioning the Fed’s raising of interest rates, Mnuchin said, “These are really more just comments saying, as interest rates are going up, it’s something that the president has a concern.”

“But let me be clear,” Mnuchin added, “he absolutely respects the independence of the Fed.”

Amid signals that the central bank will raise interest rates further this year, Trump said in a July 19 interview with CNBC: “I don’t like all of this work that we’re putting into the economy, and then I see rates going up.”

Vice President Mike Pence echoed the president’s comments in an interview on Fox’s “Sunday Morning Futures,” saying, “We don’t want policies out of Capitol Hill or elsewhere that diminish the tremendous energy that we have in this economy today.”

Pressed further Sunday by Fox host Chris Wallace, Mnuchin said, “We think the Fed will be very careful in managing the economy.”

The Fed raised interest rates for the second time this year in June and has indicated it may hike rates twice more before year’s end.

Mnuchin Outlook For Sustained 3% Growth At Odds With Forecasters

By David McLaughlin And Rich Miller

[Bloomberg News](#), July 29, 2018

The second-quarter surge shows the U.S. economy is “well on the path” for four or five years of sustained annual growth of 3 percent, said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin – a rosy outlook at odds with that of many economists as well as the U.S. central bank.

“We can only project a couple years in the future, but I think we’re well on this path for several years,” Mnuchin said on “Fox News Sunday,” as President Donald Trump’s economic team fanned out across morning talk shows to cheer-lead the economy.

The U.S. economy accelerated in the second quarter to the fastest pace since 2014, the government reported on Friday, allowing Trump to link the increase with his economic policies, including the biggest tax overhaul since the Reagan era and a push for deregulation.

The second quarter may prove as good as it gets for the world’s largest economy, though, and few economists

expect it to attain the president’s goal of sustained growth of 3 percent. Long Expansion

The U.S. expansion, which dates back some nine years, is set to weaken as the impulse from the 2017 tax cuts fades, businesses retrench in the face of foreign tariffs or a strong dollar, and the Federal Reserve raises interest rates further.

The president “deserves the victory lap,” White House economic director Larry Kudlow said on CNN, adding that faster economic growth could continue for a “bunch” of years.

Mnuchin said that Trump respects the independence of the Fed, despite the president’s recent criticism of the central bank for raising interest rates.

In fact, Mnuchin said it was responsible for the Fed to raise rates as the economy grows faster and inflation rises. Managing Inflation

“The Fed has been targeting 2 percent inflation, and obviously with 2 percent inflation we have to have at least slightly higher interest rates to manage through that,” he said.

The 4.1 percent uptick in second-quarter gross domestic product was propelled by consumer spending, business investment and a decline in the trade deficit. Yet as the effects fade from the tax cuts, economists expect the pace to moderate, with forecasts showing growth will come in around 3 percent this year before tailing off by 2020 to 1.8 percent.

The International Monetary Fund predicts U.S. growth of 2.9 percent in 2018 and 2.7 percent next year.

While there’s evidence that tax reforms and cuts are helping to stimulate activity, the strength of consumer spending in the second quarter is unlikely to continue into the second half of the year, Bloomberg economists Carl Riccadonna and Tim Mahedy said in a note.

“Dollar strength will slow exports, and importers will adjust supply lines widening the trade balance,” they wrote. “Furthermore, residential investment looks to remain weak, due in part to last year’s tax reform, and consumer spending will moderate in the second half as the Fed continues to remove policy accommodation.” Fed’s Outlook

The Trump administration’s official goal is for sustained GDP growth of 3 percent, which would well exceed the average 2.3 percent pace during the expansion that started in July 2009, as well as the Fed’s longer-run expectation of 1.8 percent.

The last time the economy enjoyed a sustained period of above 3 percent growth was in the late 1990s, when GDP was goosed by a technology-driven surge in productivity under then President Bill Clinton.

Trump forecast on Friday that future trade deals would spark further expansion as he pursues a hawkish trade agenda that includes tariffs on steel and aluminum and a threat to slap duties on \$500 billion in Chinese imports. Many

economists and analysts expect the opposite impact if the U.S. actions trigger a global rise in protectionism.

Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker agreed last week to negotiate lower barriers to transatlantic commerce and put auto tariffs on hold.

While net exports contributed 1.06 percentage points to second-quarter growth, the most since 2013, the boost is probably temporary. The numbers reflected a 9.3 percent gain in shipments abroad, boosted partly by a surge in soybean shipments ahead of China's retaliatory tariffs.

Few analysts are counting on this component to keep delivering in the face of a strong dollar and tariffs that have been proposed or already implemented. Meanwhile, steady domestic demand from households and businesses means imports will pick up, potentially causing the trade deficit to widen.

Employers Eager To Hire Try A New Policy: 'No Experience Necessary'

Inexperienced job applicants face better odds in the labor market as more companies drop work-history and degree requirements

By Kelsey Gee

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

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Stock Market Fights Off Big Tech Stumbles

S&P 500 ekes out a gain for the week as earnings disappointments are seen as isolated

By Akane Otani

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Fed Looks For Goldilocks Path As Jobless Rate Drops

Central-bank researchers study metro-areas data for clues on inflation when unemployment is low

By Nick Timiraos

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Kudlow Defends Tariffs On China, Wants To Avoid EU Duties

By David Beavers

[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

The director of the White House National Economic Council on Sunday staunchly defended President Donald Trump's use of targeted tariffs against China, while insisting the president ultimately "wants to have no tariffs" on the European Union.

"You know, if they're targeted for good purpose, as per China, I think the answer is absolutely yes," Larry Kudlow said of imposing trade duties during an interview on CNN's "State of the Union." "That's always been my view. Most free traders agree. China has not played by the rules. And the trading system is broken, largely because of them."

"Now, I hope we get to our EU trade deal," Kudlow said. "The president has adopted a view with which I completely agree. He's a free trader. And he wants to have no tariffs."

Kudlow expressed cautious optimism coming out of Trump's meeting last week at the White House with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to hash out trade disputes.

"If the deal works through nicely — and it's going to be several stages — I don't think there will be steel tariffs for the European Union. I don't think there will be automobile tariffs," Kudlow said, cautioning, though: "I don't want to get ahead of it."

At their meeting at the White House, Trump and Juncker agreed to halt plans for new tariffs and negotiate trade practices in an attempt to defuse rising trade tensions.

The Trump administration had slapped duties on European steel and aluminum imports, prompting retaliatory tariffs from the EU on roughly \$3.3 billion in U.S. goods.

Trump Adviser Kudlow Says U.S. To 'Immediately' Start EU Trade Talks On Agriculture

By Yuka Hayashi

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Soda, Motorcycle Prices Rise As Tariffs Hit Home For Consumers

U.S. manufacturers are charging more to cope with rising steel, aluminum costs

By Patrick McGroarty And Bob Tita

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Exclusive: BMW To Raise Prices Of Two U.S.-Made SUV Models In China

By Norihiko Shirouzu

[Reuters](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Rising Backlash As US Firms Seek Trump's Steel Tariff Waiver

By Richard Lardner

[Associated Press](#), July 29, 2018

U.S. companies seeking to be exempted from President Donald Trump's tariff on imported steel are accusing American steel manufacturers of spreading inaccurate and misleading information, and they fear it may torpedo their requests.

Robert Miller, president and CEO of NLMK USA, said objections raised by U.S. Steel and Nucor to his bid for a waiver are "literal untruths." He said his company, which imports huge slabs of steel from Russia, has already paid \$80 million in duties and will be forced out of business if it isn't excused from the 25 percent tariff. U.S. Steel and Nucor are two of the country's largest steel producers.

"They ought to be ashamed of themselves," said Miller, who employs more than 1,100 people at mills in Pennsylvania and Indiana.

Miller's resentment, echoed by several other executives, is evidence of the backlash over how the Commerce Department is evaluating their requests to avoid the duty on steel imports. They fear the agency will be swayed by opposition from U.S. Steel, Nucor and other domestic steel suppliers that say they've been unfairly hurt by a glut of imports and back Trump's tariff.

U.S. Steel said its objections are based on detailed information about the dimensions and chemistry of the steel included in the requests. "We read what is publicly posted and respond," said spokeswoman Meghan Cox. Nucor did not reply to requests for comment.

The 20,000-plus waiver applications that the Commerce Department has received illustrate the chaos and uncertainty ignited by Trump's trade war against America's allies and adversaries. It's a battle that critics of his trade policy, including a number of Republican lawmakers, have warned is misguided and will end up harming U.S. businesses.

Trump and European leaders agreed this past Wednesday not to escalate their dispute over trade, but the tariff on steel and a separate duty on aluminum imports remains in place as the U.S. and Europe aim for a broader trade agreement. The metal taxes would continue to hit U.S. trading partners such as Canada, Mexico and Japan even if the U.S. and the EU forge a deal.

Miller bristled over insistence by Nucor and U.S. Steel that steel slab is readily available in the United States. "That's just not true," he said.

His company isn't the only one looking overseas for a product described as being consistently in short supply. California Steel Industries, a mill east of Los Angeles in Fontana, described the slab shortage as "acute" on the West Coast and declared that its waiver request is critical to its survival.

Aiming to rebuild the U.S. steel industry, Trump relied on a rarely used 1962 law that empowers him to impose

tariffs on particular imports if the Commerce Department determines those goods threaten national security. He added a twist: Companies could be excused from the tariff if they could show, for example, that U.S. manufacturers don't make the metal they need in sufficient quantities.

But there are hurdles to clear on the path to securing an exemption. A single company may have to file dozens of separate requests to account for even slight variations in the metal it's buying. That means a mountain of paperwork to be filled out precisely. If not, the request is at risk of being rejected as incomplete. All this can be time-consuming and expensive, especially for smaller businesses.

The requests are open to objections. The Commerce Department posts the exemption requests online to allow third parties to offer comments — even from competitors who have an interest in seeing a rival's request denied. But objections are frequently being submitted just as the comment period closes, undercutting the requester's ability to fire back.

Willie Chiang, executive vice president of Plains All American Pipeline, told the House Ways and Means subcommittee on trade last week that his company had no opportunity to respond to objections that contained "incorrect information" before the Commerce Department denied its exclusion request. Chiang didn't say who submitted the inaccurate information.

"The intent here is to restrict imports on a broad scale," said Richard Chriss, executive director of the American Institute for International Steel, a free trade group opposed to tariffs. "It wouldn't make sense from the administration's perspective to design a process that readily granted exclusions."

The Commerce Department declined to comment for this story.

Department officials have so far made public only a small number of their rulings.

An analysis of the numbers by the office of Rep. Jackie Walorski, an Indiana Republican and one of the most vocal opponents of the steel tariff on Capitol Hill, shows that 760 requests have been approved while 552 have been denied. The department hasn't yet approved a waiver request that triggered objections, according to Walorski's review.

The congresswoman's office also examined the more than 5,600 publicly available comments and found they were submitted on average about four days before the end of the 30-day comment period. More than 50 percent of the comments weren't delivered until 48 hours or less before the comment window closed. It took department an average of nine days to post comments online after receiving them, according to the analysis. The most prolific commenters were Nucor and U.S. Steel with 1,064 and 1,009, respectively.

A waiver request Seneca Foods Corporation submitted for tinplated steel it had already agreed to purchase from

China was among the denials. U.S. Steel had objected, calling the tinplate a “standard product” that’s readily available in the United States. In fact, U.S. Steel said it currently supplies the material to Seneca Foods, the nation’s largest vegetable canner.

The New York-based Seneca Foods declined to comment. But in its waiver application, the company said domestically-made tinplate “is of inferior quality to imported material.” Seneca Foods also said it’s unclear, at best, if U.S. suppliers have the ability or willingness to expand their production in the long term to meet the company’s annual demand for the material.

Philadelphia-based Crown Cork & Seal, a manufacturer of metal packaging for food and beverages, submitted a sharply worded attachment to its waiver application that anticipated pushback from domestic manufacturers. American steel mills, the document said, cannot meet aggregate demand for tinplate and have no plans to increase their capacity.

“We anticipate the U.S. mills will attempt to rebut this statement when they object to this exclusion request, but we encourage the Department of Commerce to see through their manipulative attempt to exploit the rules of the exclusion request process,” the application said.

Daniel Shackell, Crown Cork & Seal’s vice president for steel sourcing, said he’s not optimistic about the company’s chances of getting all 70 of its waiver requests approved. Eight have been granted so far primarily because the metal specified in those requests is not made in the United States. Twelve others have been denied, leaving 50 still to be decided.

“It’s hard not to interpret that the Commerce Department wants domestic suppliers to have an edge,” Shackell said.

Jay Zidell, president of Tube Forgings of America, a small company in Portland, Oregon, said he’s filed 54 exclusion requests and U.S. Steel has objected to 38 of them. U.S. Steel declared it is “willing and ready to satisfy” Tube Forgings’ demands for carbon steel tubing. But Zidell said the comments ignored past problems with metal quality and workmanship that led his company to sever a prior relationship with U.S. Steel.

Still, he’s worried the Commerce Department won’t approve all of the requests. Tube Forgings already has spent \$600,000 on tariffs, he said, and may be on the hook for much more than that.

“The entire system is just screwed up,” Zidell said.

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Iowa Farmers Wary Of Aid, Trade Wars But Still Turn Out For Trump

By Tom Polansek

[Reuters](#), July 26, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Conservative Activist Warns Of Possible Recession Caused By Trump’s Trade Policies

By Steve Peoples

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

Billionaire industrialist Charles Koch is warning that Trump administration trade policies could trigger a recession.

The conservative activist is lashing out at the Republican president’s brewing international trade war as hundreds of donors attend a private gathering in Colorado.

Koch tells reporters during a rare question-and-answer session that “protectionism at any level” is “detrimental.”

He says Trump’s approach, “if it’s severe enough,” could lead to a recession.

The administration has imposed billions of dollars of tariffs on Chinese and Canadian goods and threatened billions more on America’s allies in Europe. The White House last week announced plans to send \$12 billion in taxpayer dollars to U.S. farmers to help ease the economic fallout.

The powerful Koch network is promising to punish politicians in either party who support the tariffs.

Charles Koch Says Trump Tariffs Could Trigger U.S. Recession

By John McCormick

[Bloomberg News](#), July 29, 2018

Billionaire industrialist Charles Koch, who leads a powerful policy and political network, said Sunday he worries President Donald Trump’s actions on trade and tariffs put the booming U.S. economy at risk of recession.

While saying it’s impossible to know for sure because the president’s trade policy remains fluid, Koch said the greater the level of trade restrictions, the greater the risk of severe economic fallout.

“It depends on the degree,” he said in Colorado during a rare on-the-record meeting with reporters. “If it’s severe enough, it could.”

Koch said any protectionism at any level is very detrimental. “Every nation that’s prospered is one that didn’t engage in trade wars,” he said.

Trump has already imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports in the name of national security, as well as duties on certain Chinese products in response to allegations of intellectual property theft. That’s drawn retaliatory tariffs on soybeans and other U.S. goods in an escalating conflict,

although Trump struck a truce with the European Union last week pending further negotiations.

Strong Quarter

The U.S. economy in the second quarter expanded at its strongest pace since 2014, the government reported on Friday. But many economists see growth tailing off from here, and the potential for a trade war are part of their assessments.

Charles Koch, 82, and brother David Koch, 78, didn't support Trump in the 2016 campaign, but the network they built has since praised his administration's efforts to cut taxes and regulations. A White House spokesman didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

In June, the Koch network said it was planning a "multi-year, multi-million-dollar" campaign to promote free trade and oppose Trump's moves to impose tariffs. The effort is to include advertising, voter mobilization and lobbying.

Koch's comments came as network donors are gathered for a three-day meeting at a luxury resort in Colorado Springs that ends on Monday. The network, with more than 700 donors who give at least \$100,000 per year, has convened such gatherings twice annually since 2003.

Midterms Approach

So far this weekend, the network sought to downplay its role in this year's midterm congressional campaign, even as ads it paid for have hammered Democrats in battleground states. Planned spending on campaign-associated activities was prominent when the network last assembled in January.

Since then, analysts and polling have increasingly suggested Democrats have a good chance of winning control of the U.S. House in November's midterm elections, in line with historical trends. The party needs a net gain of 23 seats to do that.

Speaking to reporters, Koch indicated a willingness to work with Democrats, so long as they embrace free-market solutions.

"I don't care what initials are in front of after somebody's name," he said. "I would like there to be many more politicians who would embrace and have the courage to run on a platform like this."

Koch also indicated he wants to have the network do a better job of holding Republicans accountable when they stray from what they've promised. The network is going to be "much stricter" in holding people it supports to their commitments, he said.

'Irresponsible Budget'

That was a message Brian Hooks, president of the Charles Koch Foundation and Charles Koch Institute, shared with donors earlier in the day, as he criticized increased federal spending passed by Congress, where Republicans have a majority in both chambers.

"Many of you watched in disgust as the most fiscally irresponsible budget in the history of our country was passed

in March under a Republican government," Hooks said. "We supported the election of some of these guys that just voted for a \$1.3 trillion federal spending bill."

Hooks added: "People are taking us for granted, and so if we want things to change, we have to do things differently. No more waiting for others to set the agenda. This network has got to lead."

Hate the Sin

While Hooks blamed Trump for the nation's divisions a day earlier, Koch stopped short of that.

"We've had divisiveness long before Trump became president," Koch said. "I'm into hating the sin, not the sinner."

Some of the elected officials attending the gathering include Governor Rick Scott of Florida, who's running for U.S. Senate; Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin; Senator John Cornyn of Texas; Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina; Representative Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, who's running for U.S. Senate; Representative Doug Collins of Georgia; and Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, who's running for governor. All are Republicans.

Plans call for the network to spend about \$400 million on state and federal policy and politics during the two-year cycle that culminates with November's balloting, a 60 percent increase over 2015-16. Besides trying to influence electoral politics, the network also works on education, criminal justice, workforce and poverty issues.

Koch Group Condemns 'Divisiveness' And 'Lack Of Leadership' In Washington

By Michelle Ye Hee Lee

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

Top officials with the donor network affiliated with billionaire industrialist Charles Koch this weekend sought to distance the network from the Republican Party and President Trump, citing tariff and immigration policies and "divisive" rhetoric out of Washington.

At a gathering of hundreds of donors at the Broadmoor resort here, officials reiterated their plans to spend as much as \$400 million on policy issues and political campaigns during the 2018 cycle. Earlier this year, they announced heavy spending on helping Republicans hold the Senate. But in a warning shot to Trump and the GOP, network co-chair Brian Hooks lamented "tremendous lack of leadership" in Trump's Washington and the "deterioration of the core institutions of society."

He called out the White House and Trump-allied GOP lawmakers, particularly over trade policy and increased federal spending, and added that "the divisiveness of this White House is causing long-term damage."

In remarks to reporters Sunday, Charles Koch — now solely at the helm after the retirement of his ailing brother

David earlier this year — stopped short of blaming Trump personally for the political divisions.

"We've had divisiveness long before Trump became president and we'll have it long after he's no longer president," he said. "I'm into hating the sin, not the sinner."

Asked if Democrats were to retake control of the House, he said, "I don't care what initials are in front, or after, somebody's name. . . . I'd like there to be many more politicians who would embrace and have the courage to run on a platform like this."

In reality, the network is expected to be a powerful force for the political right during the midterm elections, particularly in states where Senate Democrats are most vulnerable. It is also heavily backing the confirmation of federal Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. Some of the network's biggest donors and most experienced activists are Trump's most ardent supporters.

But some of Trump's most controversial actions break sharply with the priorities of the libertarian-leaning network, which opposes Trump's tariffs on foreign goods and his hard line on immigration, including the now-suspended zero-tolerance policy that saw hundreds of migrant families separated at the border.

And the criticism, coming just months before a midterm election in which the control of Congress remains in the balance, was significant considering the enormous sway the Koch network has had over the years in helping the Republicans gain and hold on to power.

At the three-day gathering, network leaders pointed to their recent ad campaigns thanking Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) for co-sponsoring legislation that rolled back Dodd-Frank regulations, and attacking Rep. Lou Barletta (R-Pa.) — the Trump-backed GOP candidate for Senate against incumbent Democratic Sen. Robert P. Casey Jr. — for a vote to increase federal spending.

"I know this is uncomfortable. It was uncomfortable for me, too," Emily Seidel, chief executive of the network's political arm Americans for Prosperity, said in her Sunday briefing to donors. "The fact that we're willing to do this during an election year shows everyone that we're dead serious."

"This network will no longer follow anyone's lead or be taken for granted," Seidel said, as donors applauded.

The network is holding education sessions for its activists across the country to extol the value of free trade and pro-immigrant laws, and countering Trump's approaches on both issues. They are undertaking what officials described as a "a multiyear, multimillion-dollar commitment" to promote the benefits of free trade.

In interviews before this weekend's confab, several donors said they are glad to see the network taking a more independent tone publicly, heralding it as the classical liberal views of Charles Koch that attracted many of them to his network.

But some expressed anxiety over the reality of a Democrat-led House.

"A lot of libertarians are big advocates for divided government. Divided government might end up with some resolutions for some of these issues where we're more aligned with the other side, like enabling DACA kids to have certainty, or trade," said Frayda Levin, a Koch donor from New Jersey. "At the same time, personally, I don't know that I'd be happy to see Nancy Pelosi as speaker."

Tom Shepherd, a businessman from Ohio and Koch donor, said: "I think that holding Republicans and Democrats accountable for decisions and votes that violate our principles is extremely helpful."

Asked if he would stand by the network if it began endorsing Democrats or if its activities cost the House GOP majority, Shepherd said: "Absolutely. I have no problem with it whatsoever."

Network officials said their work on veterans' and criminal justice issues served as a model for future policy wins, citing their willingness to work with Democrats and new allies on their priorities.

The network has met twice a year since 2003, when Koch convened a small group of like-minded business leaders to oppose increasing federal spending and steel tariffs under the George W. Bush administration.

Fifteen years later, the network has grown to encompass more than 700 donors who each contribute at least \$100,000 annually to Koch-linked groups. More than 500 of them are gathered for the three-day retreat here at the sprawling Broadmoor resort, which encircles a man-made lake and looks out to a breathtaking view of the Rocky Mountains.

Donors also discussed the status of the network's work on a range of priorities for the constellation of Koch-aligned groups, including free speech on college campuses, supporting anti-poverty programs in communities, conducting new research in an effort to reduce recidivism rates, and more.

The Washington Post and other news outlets were invited to cover portions of the weekend gathering on the condition that they not name donors in attendance without their permission.

Officials said the meeting this weekend is the largest summer gathering of like-minded donors, with 135 first-time participants. Among the Republican elected officials in attendance are Sens. John Cornyn (Tex.) and Tim Scott (S.C.), Reps. Marsha Blackburn (Tenn.) and Douglas A. Collins (Ga.), Florida Gov. Rick Scott, Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin and Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt.

It's the first such meeting after the June retirement of David Koch — the other half of the "Koch brothers" who have become household names — from business and political life because of his declining health.

Against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, Charles Koch signaled to donors sipping on cocktails and wine during Saturday's lakeside reception that he's here to stay.

"We're just getting started, because we have more opportunities in front of us than I ever imagined," he told them. "I assure you, I am not getting weak in the knees."

Bannon To Kochs: 'Shut Up And Get With The Program'

'And here's the program: Ground game to support Trump's presidency,' Bannon said in an interview.

By Alex Isenstadt

[Politico](#), July 29, 2018

Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon tore into the powerful Koch political network Sunday, accusing it of undermining President Donald Trump ahead of a midterm election that threatens to derail his presidency.

"What they have to do is shut up and get with the program, OK?" Bannon said in an interview with POLITICO. "And here's the program: Ground game to support Trump's presidency and program, [and] victory on Nov. 6."

Bannon's comments came as the network of major Republican Party donors, led by billionaire industrialist Charles Koch, convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado to discuss the 2018 political landscape. During the retreat, top Koch officials described the Trump White House as toxic and destructive to the country.

They sharply criticized Trump's protectionist trade policies, arguing that his actions were taking a toll on the economy. A video shown during the conference depicted images of recently shuttered businesses.

"The divisiveness of this White House is causing long-term damage," Brian Hooks, a senior Koch lieutenant, told reporters at the event. "When in order to win on an issue someone else has to lose, it makes it very difficult to unite people and solve the problems in this country. You see that on trade: In order to get to a good place on trade, convince the American people that trade is bad."

The Kochs, who espouse free-trade views, have long expressed discomfort with Trump, and their network largely sat out the 2016 election. But the open hostilities at this weekend's conference came as something of a surprise.

Since the election, there had appeared to be a thaw. David and Bill Koch met with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort a few months after the inauguration, and at a donor meeting earlier this year, the network lavished praise on the president's tax reform bill.

With 100 days to go before a midterm election that has emerged as a referendum on Trump and his policies, Bannon argued, the Kochs need to rally behind the president. Democrats, who he said want to halt Trump's agenda and

launch impeachment proceedings, are energized and focused — and out-hustling Republicans.

He described the Koch political operation as ineffective, saying it had wasted untold dollars on losing past elections. And he argued that voters had rejected the free-trade approach the Kochs embrace in favor of Trump's brand of economic populism.

"We can have a theoretical discussion later, OK? This is why they don't know what it means to win, OK? We don't have time to have some theoretical discussion and to have their spokesman come out and say the president is divisive," Bannon said.

He said it was unacceptable "for them to come out and talk about divisiveness" given their long-running lack of support for Trump.

"They were the first people to put the knife in his back," he said.

A Koch network spokesman, James Davis, shrugged off the criticism.

"We are focused on uniting the country to help remove barriers that are preventing people from reaching the potential," he said. "Toward that end, we look forward to working with the President Trump, Congress and communities whenever possible to help people improve their lives."

The Koch network has pledged to spend \$400 million ahead of the midterms.

Bannon left the White House a year ago, and earlier this year, he had a high-profile falling out with Trump after he made critical remarks about the president and his family in a book, "Fire and Fury."

Since that time, he has taken steps to re-ingratiate himself with the president and has been a loud outside supporter and spokesman. He described Trump's policies as across-the-board successes, praising, among other things, his handling of the economy, tariffs and tax cuts.

But he said that the Kochs had only chosen a few Trump policies to support "a-la-carte" and in many instances had actively fought him.

Displeasure with the Trump agenda was an ongoing theme of the weekend's conference. During remarks to reporters on Sunday, Charles Koch expressed regret about some of his past financial support for Republican candidates — and hinted that he'd be open to working with Democrats.

"Charles Koch is a good man, but 100 days before an election that will determine the direction of the country is not the time to tell us that you are prepared to work with Democrats that support parts of your progressive agenda," Bannon said.

"It's wrong, it's stupid and it shows contempt for the hardworking grassroots folks that delivered the victory that got your tax cut," he added.

Jack Ma's Giant Financial Startup Is Shaking The Chinese Banking System

By Stella Yifan Xie

[Wall Street Journal](#), July 29, 2018

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Have A Cryptocurrency Company? Bermuda, Malta Or Gibraltar Wants You

By Nathaniel Popper

[New York Times](#), July 29, 2018

Hedge funds go to the Cayman Islands to incorporate. Big companies are generally domiciled in Delaware. And online poker companies often set up their bases in Gibraltar and Malta.

Now the race is on to become the go-to destination for cryptocurrency companies that are looking for shelter from regulatory uncertainty in the United States and Asia.

In small countries and territories including Bermuda, Malta, Gibraltar and Liechtenstein, officials have recently passed laws, or have legislation in the works, to make themselves more welcoming to cryptocurrency companies and projects. In Malta, the government passed three laws on July 4 so companies can easily issue new cryptocurrencies and trade existing ones. In Bermuda this year, the legislature passed a law that lets start-ups doing initial coin offerings apply to the minister of finance for speedy approval.

"We are 65,000 people, and 20 square miles, but we have a very advanced economy," the premier of Bermuda, E. David Burt, said in an interview at a cryptocurrency conference in May in New York, where he was trying to pitch companies on the island's charms. "We want to position Bermuda as the incubator for this industry."

The competition for cryptocurrency companies is part of a broader rush by governments to figure out how to approach a new industry that took on outsized prominence over the last year. Becoming a crypto center has many potential upsides, including jobs and tax revenue.

But the drive to be a crypto nexus also comes with significant risk. Hackings and scams have followed the industry everywhere it has gone. They have been aided by the underlying technology introduced by Bitcoin, known as the blockchain, which was built to make it possible to send money without requiring approval from government agencies or existing financial institutions. And the cryptocurrencies are hardly stable, with the prices of most having plunged in 2018 after skyrocketing last year.

The use of cryptocurrencies by hackers was reinforced this month when the Justice Department announced charges against 12 Russian intelligence officers accused of hacking the Democratic National Committee and said they had principally used Bitcoin to fund their work.

Volatility and uncertainty have deterred some countries and caused others to hesitate in embracing crypto companies. In China, the government banned cryptocurrency exchanges and initial coin offerings after many of its citizens were swept up in the frenzy and bet their savings on digital tokens. And the Japanese authorities halted the operations of several crypto exchanges this year after one of the biggest licensed exchanges was hacked.

In the United States, the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Jay Clayton, has warned that most companies that have raised money by selling cryptocurrencies have most likely not followed the law. But his agency has not provided clear guidance on the line demarcating legal and illegal projects.

All of this has opened the door for smaller countries to provide a friendlier environment, separate from private efforts — such as in Puerto Rico — to create crypto havens. And many of the countries' moves are already having an effect, with dozens of companies — including the largest exchange in the world — announcing plans to set up offices in the small jurisdictions that have passed laws.

Bermuda has been a leading player. Apart from passing the law to allow for fast approval of initial coin offerings, the British territory has a law in the works to open the doors to cryptocurrency exchanges and related services. Mr. Burt said his government was modeling its approach on one it had taken with the insurance industry, in which Bermuda has become a major player.

Bermuda's measures have attracted Will McDonough, the founder of a new cryptocurrency called iCash. He said he had decided to base his company there because of the island's experience in international finance and the government's willingness to listen to the company's input.

"The largest issue blockchain companies have is not knowing how they'll be governed or regulated," said Mr. McDonough, a former vice president at Goldman Sachs. "Those markets that have made the rules clear have found many companies coming to play by the rules."

Mr. McDonough is planning to raise \$35 million by selling iCash tokens to investors around the world, including some in the United States. The iCash tokens are initially designed to be the method of payment for an online gambling site. He said he would still be based in Florida, but would have an office and a head of operations in Bermuda, which the island requires of all companies.

Other companies are playing the field more. Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, went shopping for a new location after Japan shut it down this year for operating without a license. The exchange, which is known for its desire to skirt regulations, announced in March that it would open new offices in Malta with hundreds of employees as a result of the friendly laws the country had put into motion.

That prompted Malta's prime minister, Joseph Muscat, to post a congratulatory tweet and proclaim the island's intention to be the "global trailblazers in the regulation of blockchain-based businesses."

But a month later, Binance's chief executive, Zhao Changpeng, traveled to Bermuda to announce that the company would also open up compliance operations there and invest \$15 million in the island. At the signing event with Mr. Burt, Mr. Zhao wore a tie and blue Bermuda shorts.

Mr. Zhao did not respond to requests for comment.

Many of the countries passing the new laws have said they are not interested in becoming a home for illicit activity. Albert Isola, Gibraltar's finance minister, said his government was accustomed to making hard decisions after regulating online gambling companies for the last 25 years.

"For every one license we've issued, we've probably said no to 10," he said. "When you're considering a new sector, to bring in big names is extremely attractive, but they've got to be good names. So you've got to be willing to say no to even some of the bigger ones."

Online gambling is responsible for around 3,000 jobs on Gibraltar, or about 10 percent of the territory's population. Mr. Isola said he saw a similar possibility in the blockchain, calling it "the next significant new flow of business."

Gibraltar is in the final stages before voting on regulations that, similar to Malta's, would let companies issue and trade digital tokens. Already, 35 companies have applied to the government for licenses to operate blockchain businesses.

Liechtenstein, the Alpine nation between Austria and Switzerland, is also among the newer entrants to the race, with the prime minister circulating a Blockchain Act this summer to allow companies to sell tokens.

The activity has spread to other areas, too. Wyoming and Delaware have passed laws aimed at welcoming certain blockchain businesses, though they have been less focused on ones that trade in tokens. In 2014, New York created a so-called BitLicense, which initially drew businesses to the state, but it has since been viewed as a deterrent because of the government's wide-ranging requirements and slow approval process.

In Switzerland, the canton of Zug has also sought out crypto business, labeling itself Crypto Valley. Zug's top economic official who has worked on the effort, Guido Bulgheroni, flew to the cryptocurrency conference in May that Mr. Burt also attended.

At a cocktail party for Crypto Valley, Mr. Bulgheroni said his first job was to make sure that anyone with a crypto project was happy being in the Zug area.

"How many other jurisdictions have that?" he said.

British Farmers Worry: Who Will Pick The Fruit After Brexit?

By William Booth And Karla Adam

[Washington Post](#), July 28, 2018

After a dozen futile calls to big farms, agricultural lobbyists and labor contractors, we finally found him.

The rarest of the rare, the British berry picker.

Meet Max Hughes, a 20-year-old university student and history major, who is spending his summer harvesting blackcurrants at the Snell family farm in Herefordshire. He rides in the back of a harvester all day, standing beside a Czech migrant and a couple of sun-bronzed Romanian guys, who know very little English.

"No matter, you can't hear a thing they say over the noise," Hughes said, gesturing toward the wheeled harvester beside him. Its vibrating metal fingers shake the currant bushes and bring the tart berries via conveyor belt to the sorting table, where Hughes and his teammates discard the leaves, twigs, slugs and occasional mouse — whatever you don't want to see in a frozen fruit pack.

Britain today is completely dependent on foreign workers to pick its fruit and vegetables. According to the National Farmers Union, an industry lobbying group, of the 60,000 seasonal workers in the fields last year, barely one percent was British. The vast majority come from Eastern Europe, particularly Bulgaria and Romania.

British university student Max Hughes took a summer job at the A.J. & C.I. Snell farm in Herefordshire. (Alice Zoo/For The Washington Post)

As long as Britain has remained part of the European Union, by treaty its doors have been wide-open to the "free movement" of fellow members, including those seasonal farmworkers who come for four or five months, get paid in British pounds and return home for the winter.

But as Britain prepares to leave the E.U., bringing the era of free movement to a close, farmers have begun to panic: Who will pick the crops next spring?

Already, labor shortages driven by economic shifts have left produce rotting in the strawberry fields and the high-tech, hydroponic poly-tunnels where top-tier soft fruit is produced. Jacqui Green, chief executive of the Berry Gardens growers cooperative, reports a 30 to 40 percent shortfall in labor this year.

"It's pretty grim," Green said. "And it's probably going to get worse before it potentially gets better, post-Brexit."

During the 2016 Brexit campaign, anxiety over mass migration was top of mind, fueled in part by claims that, for example, millions of Muslims would arrive as soon as Turkey joined the E.U. (Turkey is not in the union and has no prospect of joining in the foreseeable future.)

With Britain's exit from the bloc, Prime Minister Theresa May vows that the country will regain "control of our borders" and dramatically curtail immigration.

Yet critics of Brexit argue that Britain desperately needs foreign workers — not only "the best and brightest" in finance, tech and medicine, who May promises will still be welcome, but those who clean hotel rooms in Brighton, man kitchens in London and harvest tomatoes in Norfolk.

If far fewer workers come from Europe, those jobs will have to be filled by Brits — who don't seem very keen, truth be told — or contracted from Belarus or Nepal or the Philippines.

Britain had such a foreign farmworker scheme in the past, but it was scrapped — and now there are growing calls to restart it.

Stephanie Maurel, the chief executive of Concordia, a recruitment company that supplies workers to about 200 British farms, said they've had virtually zero Brits apply.

"We've had two applications out of 10,000," she said. "It's statistically quite damning."

Asked why Brits aren't high on the work, she recited the list: early hours, long days, physical toll, seasonality, lack of affordable transport, "and, quite simply, the farms aren't in places with high levels of unemployment."

And, unless you're a local, you live in a trailer. Often a nice trailer, with WiFi, but still.

Maurel said some Brits work in less taxing farm jobs — as logistics managers or office staff — but even those higher-paying, indoor jobs are mostly taken by Eastern Europeans these days.

She said the rare British workers who give the fruit and vegetable harvest a try, "literally don't last a week."

Hughes and three other university students are the only Brits harvesting berries at the Snell family farm this summer, out of a workforce of 300.

"That's quite something, isn't it?" said Christine Snell who owns the award-winning, environmentally sensitive farm with her husband, Anthony. "We want to get the message across: If we could recruit British workers, we would, but we cannot."

Snell drove a Washington Post reporter out to see these exotic British berryworkers. They looked hot and dusty but otherwise like healthy contestants on a reality TV show.

For Hughes, the long workday begins at 5 a.m. and ends in the late afternoon. He said with overtime and bonuses for quick sorting, he could make almost \$4,000 for six weeks of six-day work. The worst part, he said, is the dull, repetitive nature of the job. He zones out by listening to music through his ear buds. "It's not a bad summer job," he said.

But he and his mates think they understand why so few Brits want farm jobs.

"A lot of kids would never do this kind of work," said Lewis Hiscox, 24, a recent graduate from Harper Adams

University, who was working on the blackcurrant harvester, too. "They'd rather give London a try for more money, more fun. Also, there's the snob thing. Farm work is associated with Eastern Europeans," meaning "work for poor people."

Many observers have suggested that Brits today are "too lazy" to do the farm work of their yeoman ancestors. Hiscox said that physically, "the British worker could definitely do this job." He said the work provides an "outdoor life" and decent pay for a young person.

Elliot Packham, 22, who just graduated from Cardiff University, wondered, "If the pay were better, more might try?" He noted that then strawberries would cost more.

"So there's the economics of it," he said.

Some British commentators have suggested that maybe recently released felons could be employed on the farms — the way German prisoners of war were used during World War II.

Others have wondered if hale and hearty Britons living on social welfare benefits could be prodded to bend their backs to bring in a crop of strawberries. (Though those who receive such benefits may question if the work would be worth the risk of not requalifying for benefits after the season ends.)

Gabriela Yuganaru, a 50-year-old Romanian crew leader on the Snell farm, has been picking for 10 years. "If it was so hard, why would I come back? Your back is sore, okay? A fast picker can make 100 pounds in a day."

She said, "Maybe the government gives people too much money not to work. I don't know." She said back home the governments are not so generous. "Better to work," she said.

Helen Whately, a Conservative party politician who chairs the all-party parliamentary group for fruit and vegetable farmers, said growers would be facing a shortage of labor without Brexit, but the vote to leave the E.U. has "arguably made the problem a bit more acute." Already, it has contributed to a weakening of the pound, thus decreasing the financial incentives for foreign workers, at the same time that economies are improving in source countries, such as Romania.

Whately is campaigning for a seasonal agricultural workers scheme that could include countries outside of the E.U. and would allow pickers to come and work for a defined and limited period of time.

Other than that? Robots? But berries are notoriously difficult to pick mechanically, Snell said.

Adrian Cirstea, the packing house and logistics manager at the Snell farm, who is originally from Romania, imagines that after Brexit, British growers will have look far and wide for labor.

"They'll have to go further east and further south," he said, to Africa and Asia, to find workers. Meaning that Britain may see the same number of foreign farmworkers, but fewer

Bulgarians and more from Eritrea and Moldova. Maybe even Turkey.

Therapists Seeing Patients With Trump Derangement Syndrome

By Kyle Perisic

[Daily Caller](#), July 29, 2018

Therapists around Washington, D.C., are noticing a sharp increase in patients describing symptoms of what has been called Trump Derangement Syndrome.

"There is a fear of the world ending," said DC Counseling and Psychotherapy Center founder, Elisabeth LaMotte, referring to some of President Donald Trump's decisions. "It's very disorienting and constantly unsettling."

LaMotte described an uptick in her patients describing what the right refers to as Trump Derangement Syndrome, CBC reported Saturday. "Is he gonna blow us all up?" one of her patients asked.

Urban Dictionary defines Trump Derangement Syndrome as "a mental condition in which a person has been driven effectively insane due to their dislike of Donald Trump, to the point at which they will abandon all logic and reason."

Clinical psychologist Jennifer Panning calls it "Trump Anxiety Disorder" because "symptoms were specific to the election of Trump and the resultant unpredictable sociopolitical climate."

Trump himself tweeted about the disorder July 18, saying those on the left "would rather go to war" with Russia than see a peace talk.

LaMotte added that she's treated some Trump supporters as well, mostly because friends and families have alienated them for publicly supporting the president.

Washington therapist Steven Stosny recounted treating a member of the Trump administration and the toll it took on his family-life. (RELATED: RAND PAUL: 'TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME' HAS INFILTRATED THE SENATE)

"His daughter was starting to hate him," Stosny said. "It was very hard on his spouse, too. The wife couldn't take it anymore. It's tough when one spouse is at war with the children."

While Stosny's patient left the administration, the couple divorced.

In A Divided U.S., Therapists Treating Anxiety Are Hearing The Same Name Over And Over: Donald Trump

By Matt Kwong

[CBC \(CAN\)](#), July 28, 2018

"Is he gonna blow us all up?"

So inquired one of Elisabeth LaMotte's patients recently, fretting out loud about the volatility of U.S. President

Donald Trump's actions during a therapy session at her Washington practice.

It was a rhetorical question — one that predated Trump's threats of a showdown with Iran this week. But if the question wasn't meant in earnest, the politically induced anxiety LaMotte is hearing about from her clients certainly is, says the founder of the D.C. Counseling and Psychotherapy Center.

She refers to it as a "collective anxiety" among patients who feel on edge about how potentially dire the president's decisions could be.

"There is a fear of the world ending," she said. "It's very disorienting and constantly unsettling."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attends a meeting with a group of Foreign Ministry officials in Tehran on Sunday. Rouhani has warned Trump against provoking his country, while indicating peace might still be possible.

What's been called "Trump Anxiety Disorder" has been on the rise in the months following the election, according to mental-health professionals from across the country who report unusually high levels of politics-related stress in their practices.

And it's maybe not surprising given the relentlessly negative headlines and politically divisive climate.

This week, it was a menacing all-caps Trump tweet warning Iran about potentially historic "CONSEQUENCES." Previously, it was his Supreme Court picks and fears that the legal right to abortion could be overturned, or his immigration policies separating families at the border, or his apparent submission to Russian President Vladimir Putin before a global audience.

From Trump supporters, LaMotte hears about the pain of "feeling socially or familially isolated" for supporting the president's agenda, "even if they don't support his tactics."

From Trump's detractors, LaMotte has been struck by how much their anxieties resemble those of patients raised by a parent with a personality disorder — someone who would display traits like "grandiosity, excessive attention-seeking and severe lack of empathy."

"Whether it's conscious or not, I think we look to the president of the United States as a psychological parent," she said. The symptoms

In a 2017 essay for a book co-edited by psychiatrists from Harvard Medical School and the Yale School of Medicine, clinical psychologist Jennifer Panning of Evanston, Ill., called the condition "Trump Anxiety Disorder," distinguishing it from a generalized anxiety disorder because "symptoms were specific to the election of Trump and the resultant unpredictable sociopolitical climate."

Though not an official diagnosis, the symptoms include feeling a loss of control and helplessness, and fretting about what's happening in the country and spending excessive time on social media, she said.

Panning said intense consumption of media coverage of this presidency is making some people's Trump-related anxiety worse.

"They say they're wondering what's next," she said.

Trump's appointment of one conservative justice to the Supreme Court and the recent nomination of another has left one of her married lesbian clients "significantly concerned about the legitimacy of their marriage in the future," she said.

Researchers say fixating on the news and social media can increase politically induced stress.

Connie Sherman, the manager of a dental practice in San Diego, said she's been sleeping fitfully post-election, constantly checking her phone for the latest headlines in the wee hours.

"When [special counsel] Robert Mueller's indictments news dropped, I wound up staying up in the middle of the night when I should have been sleeping, just thinking about it, just worried for our country," she said. Stress of supporting Trump

The American Psychological Association has recorded a rise in anxiety in the Trump era, with a five per cent increase (52 to 57 per cent) in politically induced stress levels over a six-month period before, during and after the 2016 election. Overall, stress levels were the highest they've been in a decade, according to the APA.

In an online survey in February 2017, two-thirds of Americans — including most Democrats as well as most Republicans — said they were stressed about the future of the nation. Most of the more than 3,500 people polled blamed the extreme political polarization for their anxiety. There was a strong correlation between stress levels and electronic news consumption.

One symptom of Trump-related anxiety is a fear of what might happen next — including, for example, how his judicial appointments could impact controversial issues like abortion rights.

Some Trump supporters also report feeling more stressed, confiding to therapists that uncivil discourse and attacks on the president were causing them anxiety.

Washington therapist Steve Stosny recounted how an official with the Trump administration came to see him not long ago. At work, the official explained, he felt anxious about his high-pressure job in a highly scrutinized White House. At home, he faced a more personal turmoil: his liberal-leaning family grew to resent him for working for Trump.

"His daughter was starting to hate him," Stosny said. "It was very hard on his spouse, too. The wife couldn't take it anymore. It's tough when one spouse is at war with the children."

The patient eventually left his job, but the damage was already done. The couple began divorce proceedings, Stosny said.

According to the APA, a person's political affiliation can affect their risk of anxiety. About 26 per cent of Republicans polled post-election considered "the political climate" to be a source of stress, compared to 72 per cent of Democrats who felt the same way.

Pro-Trump supporters face off with anti-Trump protesters outside a Trump rally in Phoenix, Ariz., back in August 2017. Some supporters of the president say the judgment and vitriol they're subjected to by Trump opponents stresses them out.

Jaime Gale, a Trump supporter in Avon Lake, Ohio, often shares her anxiety over politics with her therapist.

"It reminds me of how I felt after 9/11," said Gale, 38, referencing the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S., a time when she felt "fear of the unknown and unfamiliar."

"It scared the crap out of me. Now I'm scared of getting pounced on by somebody who doesn't like me because of Trump, just online."

The internet marketing consultant, who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder, backs the president as a champion of border security and a strong steward of the economy.

But the at-times abusive attacks on Trump's leadership from liberals are hurtful and can make her blood boil.

"I see that rage and anger in other people — I feel it brought out in me, too."

Gale said she once got so drawn into the "vitriol" from liberal critics online that she had an anxiety attack.

Especially "disheartening" to Gale was being labelled a "racist" and "fascist" for supporting the president's policies.

Therapists around the country told CBC they're seeing politically tinged anger and anxiety from patients no matter their political affiliation.

In Columbus, Miss., John Hawkins's LGBTQ clients have opened up about their worries "that their marriages might be voided," while Trump supporters in his sessions worry that liberals are trying to thwart a president who is "doing the best he can."

In Oklahoma City, Kevon Owen, who practises a type of scripture-based psychotherapy known as Christian counselling, said he's "seeing a lot of people anxious about the possibility of war," and has counselled clients to stop submerging themselves in clickbait articles.

In Bardstown, Ky., clinical social worker Roland Gabbert said he's never seen such heavily politicized chatter in his office in his 40-year career.

"Both from people feeling the president is being persecuted and people just beside themselves with worry about the direction of the country." "In our faces"

Maybe nowhere is the anxiety over politics more deeply felt than in the nation's capital, said Alison Howard, a clinical psychologist in D.C. She said she engages "on a daily basis"

with patients “struggling to make sense of what’s happening with this president.”

“It’s in our faces all the time,” she said. “People here are living and working in the same city where the pulse of the government is.”

In downtown Washington, a lawyer and immigrant from Uganda now working in the Department of Agriculture sat chain-smoking a pack of American Spirit cigarettes. His clinical depression was being “compounded” by a cascade of negative White House-related news, he said. So, he’s started to tune it out completely.

Perhaps no place is harder hit by political anxiety than Washington, D.C., a psychologist in the capital tells CBC News.

“I had to get off social media. I had to stop paying for cable. I started only reading fiction,” said the federal employee, who only gave the name Kenneth because he was worried speaking publicly might cause problems for him at his job.

“Maybe I should be talking to a therapist about this.”

Asked if he had heard about the president’s latest tweet to Iran’s leader, he shook his head.

“Seriously, man — don’t even tell me.”

Report: US Therapists See Increase In Patients With ‘Trump Anxiety Disorder’

By Fox News Insider

[Fox News Insider](#), July 29, 2018

Therapists say there’s been a rise in anxiety stemming from the country’s politics, and it is being called “Trump Anxiety Disorder.”

A report from CBC News in Canada says that since President Trump was elected, mental health professionals in the United States have seen an increase in patients whose stress has come from politics.

A prevalent “symptom” of the “disorder” is feeling as though the world is going to end.

Elisabeth LaMotte, founder of the D.C. Counseling and Psychotherapy Center in Washington, D.C., said that some of her patients feel “on edge” about Trump’s decisions.

“It’s very disorienting and constantly unsettling,” LaMotte said.

LaMotte told CBC News, too, that even those who support the president feel isolated within social spaces or their families.

According to an essay written by psychologist Jennifer Panning, the symptoms of “Trump Anxiety Disorder” include “feeling a loss of control and helplessness, and fretting about what’s happening in the country and spending excessive time on social media.”

A 2017 poll by the American Psychological Organization also found that nearly half of its respondents

said they were significantly stressed due to the country’s political climate.

Trump’s Economic Adviser Says He’ll Be ‘Tougher On Spending’ Ahead Of Budget Deadline

By Alex Swoyer

[Washington Times](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump’s economic adviser said Sunday the administration will be tougher on spending as the budget deficit is projected to hit \$1 trillion.

Larry Kudlow, director of the National Economic Council, told CNN that the lower taxes following the GOP tax cuts will yield lower revenue at first, but he believes the corporate tax cut will be paid for by 2020.

“I reckon it will take us a year, maybe 18 months to turn that around,” Mr. Kudlow said. “We are going to be tougher and tougher on spending.”

Mr. Kudlow said faster economic growth and getting strict on spending will eventually decrease the deficit.

His comments come as Congress is running up against a deadline to fund the government by the end of September.

Recent reports suggest the looming deadline may present the president with another large omnibus spending bill, which Mr. Trump said he would refuse to sign.

In March, the president signed a \$1.3 trillion spending bill, the second-largest in history.

“I say to Congress: I will never sign another bill like this again,” Mr. Trump said earlier this year. “It became so big because we need to take care of our military, and because the Democrats, who don’t believe in that, added things that they wanted in order to get their votes.”

He called on Congress at that time to grant him a line-item veto to cut out certain spending items. Lawmakers, though, have not given him that power.

In a tweet Sunday morning, the president suggested he would support a government shutdown if he doesn’t get money to secure the southern border.

“I would be willing to ‘shut down’ government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch & Release etc. and finally go to system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our Country!” Mr. Trump tweeted.

The Senate’s bill would fund the Department of Homeland Security with \$1.6 billion for the wall, while the House bill includes \$5 billion for the wall, according to The Hill.

Over the weekend, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Kentucky Republican, told 840 WHAS radio that funding for Mr. Trump’s border wall would likely come after the midterms.

The president also took to Twitter on Sunday morning to celebrate the more than 4 percent economic growth.

"The biggest and best results coming out of the good GDP report was that the quarterly Trade Deficit has been reduced by \$52 Billion and, of course, the historically low unemployment numbers, especially for African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Women," Mr. Trump tweeted.

Turkey Will Stand Up To U.S. In Face Of Sanctions Threat Over American Pastor: Erdogan

By Ezgi Erkoyun

[Reuters](#), July 28, 2018

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Erdogan Dismisses Trump's Threat Of Sanctions Over Detained American Pastor

By Kareem Fahim

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday pushed back at President Trump's threat to impose sanctions on Turkey for its nearly two-year detention of an American pastor, saying his government would stand firm and the United States risked losing a "strong and sincere partner."

Erdogan, speaking to reporters during a visit to South Africa, also confirmed a report in The Washington Post that Trump had intervened to help secure the release of a Turkish citizen held by Israel on terrorism charges. But he denied that Turkey had offered to release the pastor, Andrew Brunson, in exchange for Trump's intervention. "That type of negotiation didn't happen," Erdogan said.

The remarks were Erdogan's first public response to an angry message Trump posted on Twitter on Thursday, warning he would levy "large sanctions" against Turkey over the imprisonment of Brunson, who has been accused by Turkish authorities of supporting terrorist groups. U.S. officials say he is innocent.

Vice President Pence made a similar warning on Thursday, in what amounted to an unusually vigorous public rebuke by the White House of a NATO ally and a sign of the rapidly deteriorating relationship between the two governments.

On Sunday, Pence repeated the admonition, writing on Twitter, "The United States of America is prepared to bring sanctions against Turkey until Pastor Andrew Brunson is free."

The White House has repeatedly called for the release of Brunson, who is from North Carolina and has lived in Turkey for more than two decades. U.S. officials were taken aback when a Turkish court released Brunson from prison

last week but ordered him kept under house arrest while his trial continued, rather than being acquitted or deported to the United States.

Trump believed he had struck an agreement with Erdogan — to trade a Turkish citizen imprisoned on terrorism charges in Israel for Brunson's release — during a friendly meeting between the two leaders at the July 11-12 NATO summit, according to White House officials and people familiar with the deal.

Trump asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to release Ebru Ozkan, a 27-year-old Turkish woman held on charges of aiding Hamas, the Palestinian militant group, and on July 15, she was deported and sent back to Turkey. But over the next 10 days, despite his release from prison, there was no sign Brunson's trial was coming to an end.

After a testy phone call with Erdogan on Thursday, Trump tweeted his threat of sanctions.

Turkish officials immediately denied that there had been any deal. Erdogan said on Sunday that Turkey's judiciary had put Brunson under house arrest "with good intentions" because the pastor was having health problems. "Just as America has its judiciary, Turkey does as well," he said.

"Instead of respecting the decision of the judiciary, they are making this a matter of sanctions against Turkey," Erdogan said. "You cannot make Turkey step back with sanctions."

His government was discussing a range of issues with the United States, he said, including Erdogan's demand that the Trump administration extradite a U.S.-based Turkish cleric accused of orchestrating a failed coup in Turkey two years ago. The cleric, Fethullah Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, has denied the accusations.

In a speech last year, Erdogan suggested that Gulen could be traded for Brunson. On Sunday, he said "we have never made Brunson a subject of negotiations."

Fight For These State Department Workers Detained In Turkey

By Henri J. Barkey And Eric Edelman

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

President Trump has expended significant political capital working to win the freedom of pastor Andrew Brunson, an American detained in Turkey for nearly two years now on baseless espionage and terrorism charges. Trump is right to do so, but he and his administration also have a moral obligation to come to the aid of three State Department workers facing a similar plight.

We write to draw attention to the plight of the U.S. foreign service nationals — largely ignored by the Trump administration and the press — who have also been detained by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's security

apparatus. These “FSNs,” as foreign service nationals are traditionally known in diplomatic lexicon, are State Department employees. Another term for them is locally employed staff, which reflects the fact that the State Department hires Turks in Turkey, Bulgarians in Bulgaria and Argentines in Argentina. These unsung employees form the backbone of U.S. diplomatic efforts abroad. No American embassy or consulate could operate without them.

The three men have been detained in Turkey on bogus charges. Two are in jail, and one is under house arrest. As with tens of thousands of others imprisoned by the Turkish authorities in recent years, the charges against them are the product of paranoid conspiracy theories that beggar the imagination.

Jailed since February 2017, Hamza Ulucay is a 37-year veteran of the U.S. diplomatic service. Dollar bills found in his home were offered up by Turkish authorities as proof that Ulucay had something to do with the attempted July 15, 2016, coup d’etat against the Erdogan government. It is especially bizarre that Ulucay is alleged to have connections both to the network of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric living in the United States whom the government accuses of organizing the failed coup, and to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the insurgency movement deemed terrorist by both the United States and Turkey. The Gulen network has historically been a fierce opponent of the PKK and is loathed by most of the Kurdish population in Turkey’s southeast.

(We know all too well the Turkish authorities’ proclivity for inventing such farcical conspiracy theories; one of us, Barkey, has been accused of somehow orchestrating the failed 2016 coup, resulting in the issuance of an arrest warrant in absentia.)

Twenty-year department veteran Metin Topuz was likewise detained for allegedly trying to overthrow the Turkish government and for links to the Gulen movement. In both cases, U.S. officials have not been able to ascertain the specific criminal charges involved.

Nazmi Mete Canturk, who is charged with espionage and attempting to overthrow the government, has been under house arrest since January.

Erdogan has ended Turkey’s two-year state of emergency, but there is nothing to suggest that the Turkish government will stop using indictments as a means of detaining people indefinitely. In effect, Ulucay, Topuz and Canturk have become hostages whose fates rest in Erdogan’s hands.

The unwillingness of Washington to apply public pressure on Turkey to release these State Department employees sends an alarming message to other locally employed staff in Turkey: They are all subject to intimidation and pressure from Turkish authorities, and their employer doesn’t have their back. In effect, Turkish intelligence now has leverage over part of U.S. operations, shattering

diplomatic conventions. Many of these local employees have resigned. Worse, the Turks’ actions may be copied by other authoritarian states that notice the U.S. government’s indifference.

It is quite possible that Erdogan will release Brunson, the detained pastor who was recently transferred to house arrest. Turkey may soon need help from the United States, a NATO ally, if its ailing economy slides into a meltdown. Brunson’s release would be welcome, but it would also present a danger that the U.S. government would consider the matter of unjustified detentions resolved — condemning Ulucay, Topuz and Canturk to years in Turkish jails.

Congress has an opportunity to play an important role here. A new U.S. ambassador to Turkey is likely to be nominated soon. The Senate should use the confirmation process to hold the administration accountable for the safety and security of all State Department employees.

The president’s letter of instruction to chiefs of mission enjoins them to undertake measures to ensure the safety of all the employees in their charge — Americans and their local colleagues. Ambassadors and consul generals have no more-solemn obligation. A U.S. failure to show that it stands by its people will cripple the State Department’s ability to represent America overseas. Either foreign service nationals are on the U.S. team, or they are not.

Henri J. Barkey is a professor of international relations at Lehigh University and a senior fellow for the Middle East at the Council on Foreign Relations. Eric Edelman was U.S. ambassador to Turkey from 2003 to 2005.

Russia And The Far Right’s Cozy Affair

By E.j. Dionne Jr.

[Washington Post](#), July 29, 2018

The links among Vladimir Putin, President Trump, and segments of both the Republican Party and the American conservative movement seem bizarre. How can this be, given the Russian president’s KGB pedigree and a Cold War history during which antipathy toward the Soviet Union held the right together?

In truth, there is nothing illogical about the ideological collusion that is shaking our political system. If the old Soviet Union was the linchpin of the Communist International, Putin’s Russia is creating a new Reactionary International built around nationalism, a critique of modernity and a disdain for liberal democracy. Its central mission includes wrecking the Western alliance and the European Union by undermining a shared commitment to democratic values.

Putin is, first and foremost, an opportunist, so he is also happy to lend support to forces on the left when doing so advances his purposes in specific circumstances. But the dominant thrust of Putinism is toward the far right, because a nationalism rooted in Russian traditionalism cements his hold on power.

And the right in both Europe and the United States has responded. Long before Russia's efforts to elect Trump in the 2016 election became a major public issue, Putin was currying favor with the American gun lobby, Christian conservatives and Republican politicians.

In a prescient March 2017 article in Time magazine, Alex Altman and Elizabeth Dias detailed Russia's "new alliances with leading U.S. evangelicals, lawmakers and powerful interest groups like the NRA."

Evangelical Christians, they noted, found common ground with Putin, a strong foe of LGBTQ rights, on the basis of "Moscow's nationalist and ultraconservative push — led by the Russian Orthodox Church — to make the post-Soviet nation a bulwark of Christianity amid the increasing secularization of the West."

Altman and Dias highlighted the role of Maria Butina, a Russian national who was in court last week following her indictment for conspiring to act as a foreign agent.

Butina was at the forefront of forging Russian ties with the National Rifle Association. In 2015, many of its leaders traveled to Russia to attend her annual gun rights conference, Altman and Dias reported. Such a meeting is absurd on its face given Russia's autocratic nature. It should be a bigger scandal than it has been so far that those who speak so much about constitutional liberties and individual freedom have cozied up to Putin.

The Russian president did not have to invent Europe's new right. It was rising without him, although he has been happy to help it along. Writing in New Statesman, a British center-left magazine, veteran journalist John Lloyd described the formation of what he called an "Illiberal International" that seeks to limit immigration and weaken or destroy the European Union.

Lloyd focused on Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor; Viktor Orban, Hungary's prime minister; and Matteo Salvini, Italy's interior minister whose League party is now in a coalition government with the Five Star Movement.

It's important to recognize that something more is going on here than merely a generalized effort to disrupt American and European politics. Putin is pushing in a very particular direction, a lesson that should be absorbed across our philosophical divides.

The deepening ties between the Russian government and elements of the right should give pause to all conservatives whose first commitment is to democratic life. The willingness of traditionalists and gun fanatics to cultivate ties with a Russian dictator speaks of a profound alienation among many on the right from core Western values — the very values that most conservatives extol.

It should bother members of the GOP that progressive writer Brian Beutler was onto something when he observed recently that "in many ways Moscow understood Republicans better than Republicans understand themselves." Putin saw

that what he and parts of the right share is a hatred of liberalism.

And Republicans should bear in mind that disrupting Robert S. Mueller III's probe serves Putin's interests, not just Trump's.

In the meantime, progressives and moderates should not be intimidated by those, including Trump apologists, who claim that standing up to Putin's intervention in our election represents an effort to revive the Cold War. No, opposing Putin is principled, rational and necessary because he is waging a campaign against democracy and is working to undermine the pluralism and tolerance on which it depends.

It's odd that self-styled opponents of globalization who shout slogans about putting their own countries "first" are actually putting their ideology first as they seek to globalize the far right. Friends of democracy everywhere need to stand in solidarity and resist this backward-looking drift to autocracy.